



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>



100. c. 127.





REVELATION,

THE ORB OF LIGHT.

BY THE AUTHORESS OF
"THE ORB OF LIGHT; OR, THE APOCALYPTIC VISION."

"Thou shalt put the mercy seat above upon the ark; and in the ark thou shalt put the testimony that I shall give thee. And there I will meet with thee, and I will commune with thee from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubims which are upon the *ark of the testimony*, of all things which I will give thee in commandment unto the children of Israel." (Exod. xxv. 21, 22; Num. vii. 89; Ps. lxxx. 1.)

LONDON :
WERTHEIM, MACINTOSH, AND HUNT,
24, PATERNOSTER-ROW,
AND 23, HOLLES-STREET, CAVENDISH-SQUARE.

1861.

LONDON:
 WERTHEIM, MACINTOSH, AND HUNT,
 24, PATERNOSTER-ROW,
 AND 23, HOLLES-STREET, CAVENDISH-SQUARE.



THE NEW TESTAMENT.

	Page
CHAPTER I.	
THE MINISTRY OF JOHN THE BAPTIST	1
CHAPTER II.	
THE ADVENT AND TEMPTATION OF CHRIST	30
CHAPTER III.	
SERMON ON THE MOUNT ; OR, THE DECALOGUE IN THE HANDS OF CHRIST	86
CHAPTER IV.	
ON THE PARABLES OF CHRIST	130
CHAPTER V.	
ON THE MIRACLES OF CHRIST	203
CHAPTER VI.	
ON THE MIRACLES OF CHRIST	241
CHAPTER VII.	
CHRIST'S MINISTRY : HIS CONVERSATION WITH NICODEMUS ...	267
CHAPTER VIII.	
THE INSTITUTION OF THE APOSTOLIC CHURCH BY CHRIST	295

	Page
CHAPTER IX.	
THE INSTITUTION OF THE CHURCH AFTER THE RESURRECTION	333
CHAPTER X.	
CHRIST'S MINISTRY, THE CHARACTER OF PETER AS THE REPRESENTATIVE OF A BODY.....	358
CHAPTER XI.	
CHRIST'S MINISTRY	404
CHAPTER XII.	
CHRIST'S MINISTRY, MARY MAGDALENE	445
CHAPTER XIII.	
THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES.....	469
CHAPTER XIV.	
THE CONVERSION AND CALLING OF ST. PAUL	486
CHAPTER XV.	
THE RECONDITE AND CORROBORATIVE PHASE OF REVELATION	508
CHAPTER XVI.	
ON THE RESURRECTION	553
CHAPTER XVII.	
ON THE SACRAMENTS	573
CHAPTER XVIII.	
ON THE EPISTLES OF ST. JOHN	596

P R E F A C E.

IN appearing again before the public I am not less deeply moved at the position I occupy before God, and them, than I was in presenting my former work upon the Apocalypse. In my Preface to that work, I said that it was very much my wish to publish the whole ; I must, therefore, explain the cause of delay. The entire work having been glanced at by one who I was bound to consult, and having been thought too voluminous to be easy of publication, I spent two years in going through the whole to abridge it, at a moment when my mind was harassed, racked with doubts, fears, and distrust of myself about the undertaking ; and thus the abridgment only ended in the spoiling of the whole work ; but it was not till I saw the first part in print that I perceived the injury done to it by taking away all the laboured definitions of my subjects. In the part now before the public I have tried to remedy the evil, but feel bitterly that to do so wholly is impossible. Perhaps Truth must ever thus be subjected to the fire. And again, I must plead as an apology for the delay, the broad field upon which I have entered. Nothing is more

simple and easy than textual divinity; but the theoretical student, the systematizer, and he who would make theoretical truth practical, finds a broader vein, a multitude of ramifications which really have no end: in theological science certainly, and perhaps in all other sciences, these are of God, and therefore infinite as He is Infinite. They seem to challenge, defy, and to despise time, and the human intellect.

Upon this holy, prolific soil, the sincere searcher after truth will proceed cautiously, steadily, but not hurriedly. "He that believeth shall not make haste." As a literary composition I am aware the work has now no merit, nor do I care that it should have; my purpose is to set forth the prophetic phase of Revelation; while I would that this should be clear, I am simply seeking to do the work of God, and no human commendation. But while I am seeking to set forth principally this phase of Revelation, I could not knowingly leave any phase of it entirely unrecognised; and this involved the necessity of the style being rather an outline than sustained, that the work might not be too heavy and tedious to the general reader. For the ignorant I know it is already too deep. Some little hinderances in the press have, too, been another cause of delay. God has His time. But I hope now, the part upon the ancient prophets will soon be in print; and the whole in a short course of time, unless physical derangement should so increase as to prevent me from carrying out my purpose myself, in which case I should leave it in

the hands of those who would be capable, and faithful in the execution of it.

I take this opportunity of thanking my friends for their very kind sympathy with me in the undertaking; it has been as the oil and the wine in the wounds of him who fell among thieves. Of these I have one more favour to ask: their prayers. And to the enemies of the work I would say, to those who think themselves more Omnipotent than God, who think they can strive with Him, and defy the Incarnate God of the Word, or who do not believe that He is in it at all; to them I would say, Go, and learn those *seven* mystical steps in the ladder of perfection, "But I say unto you." (Matt. v. 22—28; xxxii. 34; xxxvii. 39, 44.) "To the angels of God ascending, and descending on it," I would say, Return, and learn again those same *seven* mystical steps. (vi. 3—6—15—20—33; vii. 13—25.) Learn to say with Job, "Oh that I might come even to his seat," and then at the last we shall meet there, at the top of the divinely revealed scale, "Perfect as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." "Behold, the Lord God stood above it." (Gen. xxviii. 12.) And let those His sent ones who refuse to obey His voice, fear very greatly before His own words, "Those *mine enemies*, which would not that *I should reign* over them, bring hither, and slay them before me." (Luke xix. 27.)

To those who reject the work because they are told it was written with "design," and thus interpret the word as employed in page ix of the part upon the Apocalypse, I would

say, if they will turn to their lexicon, they will find “Design—*literally*—to set clearly forth, to form an outline of, to sketch, to frame in the mind, to purpose or intend. Synon., to plan, delineate, project, mean.” And certainly this was my meaning of the word when I used it. If those who have been led to believe that it was written with *evil* design knew the honest, and more than generous means I took to avoid all personal collision, and knew too, how that ingenuousness was treated with dishonesty, misrepresentation, and violence; they would, perhaps, be able to detect evil design. There are *steps* in the Divine life, and to the advanced Christian there is nothing more painful than when his duty to God clashes with his love to his neighbour. This has been the struggle of my own bosom; and when the work is seen to be of Him, it will evidence the truth of this assertion, and justify me before the world. But there are steps and attainments even in that life before *this one*, “Perfect love”—which is always acknowledged, and pre-eminently blessed of God—is arrived at.

With regard to my *Theory* of seven dispensations, and of the third vial about to be poured upon the true Church, I am unmoved; the more so as, after all the trouble I have been at to obtain able opinion upon it, I have never received one scriptural refutation. But, perhaps, I am bound to state here the further reason of my strong assurance in myself for this more than awful mission, as more reason seems required than the testimony of God’s *own word*. Had not the work been attacked so coarsely, independent of the merit or demerit

of it, of truth or error, of justice or injustice, this evidence would for ever have remained sacred to my own bosom. In this age, when there is so much that is pretentious and spurious; by the sincere, anything supernatural must be very painful to divulge.

Out of the ten years which this work has occupied from its commencement, a very great part of it has been occupied in wandering over the Sacred Volume from the mistranslation of the Greek word of the Apocalypse, ζῶον ("Beast," iv. 6, 7); but when I found it to mean precisely the same as the seraphims of Isaiah, and the cherubims of Ezekiel, that vision seemed unlocked to me. I am aware that, literally, the word may be translated "beast;" but from the context, from the matter surrounding it, and from the manner in which the word is employed throughout the whole of the book, it is impossible that it can be so translated without intelligent translators being culpable before God. A beast, in our common acceptation of the word, cannot render to God the profound, soul-thrilling adoration which these creatures are seen to do: "Thou hast redeemed us to God by thy blood." Strange expression! the adoration of redeemed beasts! Therefore a really interested, intelligent mind would inquire how may the Word be rendered consistently with truth and common sense. Man is an *animal*, although not a beast, unless he be one with "the beast;" therefore we would avoid this word also, and suppose it to mean a being of an organised body, endowed with Divine life; or rather, as the word stands throughout the Book, a body, whose soul and

centre is the throne of God, the Eternal Spirit ; and thus the word might be rendered, "the living creature," "the angel of the Lord," "seraphim, or cherubim." And here we find the real meaning of the word, the representatives of the inspired penmen, they are seen in heaven with the representative body of the Church. (Rev. iv. 2, 4, 6, 7 ;* v. 8—10.) If God were now to speak by any other means than His Word, it would be to abrogate that Word ; and I have felt that this undertaking would be an ignominious service if it were not of the incarnate God of the Word. Here the unworthy instrument retires, leaving Him only on the field. "I will fight against them with the sword of my mouth." (Rev. ii. 16.) When I had discovered the true meaning of these "four beasts," it seemed to me the "key of knowledge." I tried it,—found it to be life. The heavy portals of the vision flew back : the inspired Word in its Divine altitude and naked precept stood before me,—the morality of prophecy and of the Gospel startled me, and I understood the words of St. John the Divine : "Behold, a throne was set in heaven, and one sat on the throne." "These beasts give glory and honour, and thanks to him that sat on the throne, who liveth for ever and ever." The mistranslation of this word beast seems almost to have been divinely suffered, as an exhibition of the duplex nature of the Church militant, worshipping, praising, and adoring God, still one with the beast, although

* The likeness of a lion, a calf, a man, and an eagle given to these living creatures, were simply emblematical of the standards of the tribes.

one with the Church triumphant. I know the devil is very double-faced ; but he has not yet quite arrived at this point, adoring God *in heaven* as a redeemed Being. When will the Church in heaven and earth be indeed one ?

The knowledge of the true meaning of this celestial body, the representatives of the prophets, with the description of "the Ancient of days" (as given by Daniel vii. 9, and by John i. 13, 14), brought most vividly and strikingly to my recollection a night vision in my childhood of precisely the same description,—of four angels (Isa. vi. ; Ezek. first and tenth chapters) and of a Being, as I have said, like Him described by Daniel. And the words of St. Paul and of St. John seemed to explain to me that vision. "The spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets." (1 Cor. xiv. 32; xii. 6.) "The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy." (Rev. xix. 10.) I say, these passages tell me that that vision of my childhood was not an unmeaning one. God may touch the lips of whom He will, with "the Spirit of prophecy," with "a live coal from off the altar." (Isa. vi. 6 ; Ezek. x. 2 ; Jer. i. 9.) At the time of the vision I was living with a married sister, who is now in glory, and slept in a room alone ; but so fear-stricken was I, that I never slept in it again. I have often thought of that vision of angels, and of one like "the Ancient of days ;" but the meaning of it a thought never broached till I found it in the Word of God. I was too young to have, now, scarcely any recollection of the house or neighbourhood ; but from this circumstance, I could walk to the room blindfolded, and point

out every particular of it. Since that time, other supernatural circumstances have confirmed my mind upon the subject of my mission ; therefore, however scurrilously I may be abused, I dare not violate the dictates of my own conscience ; and so far from retracting, I only regret my unfaithfulness. Courtesy to my friends, and duties to my family, have very greatly clashed with my service to God. My mission is “to root out, and to pull down, and to destroy, and to throw down, to build, and to plant.” To bear the name of the Lord Jesus Christ before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel ; and, by the grace of God, I will do it to my dying day. I desire no greater reward, than to live to see the fruit of this part, as I have seen the good fruit of the first part.

As I have said before, the work originated, first in tracking the river of salvation for my own satisfaction, and in a small treatise for my own children ; but as I may soon have to render up my account to God, I say now, as in His presence, a shadow of evil design has never entered my mind ; the awful responsibility has been too weighty for such a sentiment to intervene ; study and experience, as I worked, have alone opened to me my mission. If, under the most severe provocation, my mind has been ruffled in my own family, I am sorry ; but otherwise all has been sacred to my own bosom, with the exception of one dear friend, almost unknown to all parties. It was under such teaching as this that the book of Jonah was opened to me—one of the most important of prophecy. But in all these things, I believe it has been God

who has suffered them to work together to bring about His own *design*. We are all fallible, full of infirmities. We carry about with us a deeply polluted nature, so that we must all say, with the Apostle, "It is no more I, but sin that dwelleth in me." God convinces us of this, and then overrules all to His glory.

I am quite aware that my theory of seven dispensations in the Apocalypse is still somewhat obscure; the *sixth Church*, as the resurrection of the Jewish Church, the restoration of the key of government to the ancient house of David, is not set forth (pp. 56, 57; Rev. iii. 7—12); nor is the resurrection of that Church under the *sixth* seal clearly defined. (P. 84; Rev. vii. 6—12.) I hope these will yet be altered; but as an interpretation of a theory where nobody had gone before, I think it merited the leniency I asked for it.

I do not say that the necessity of a conflict of fourteen thousand years is of God; *seven* days are now sufficient for His part in it, if His people would be faithful, unless the rejection and denial of Him in Christ now involves the necessity of the revelation of "the man of sin." (John xvi. 8—11.)

When I look back upon the difficulties which all have had to contend with, in the establishment of truth, even in modern science, names amongst which I do not presume to place mine;—so far from being discouraged, I rejoice that I should even be thought worthy to suffer for "the truth's sake." One ancient corroboration of this seems to suggest itself here for my encouragement. "They did eat, they drank,

they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and the flood came, and destroyed them all." (Luke xvii. 27.)

I cannot refrain from adding one word more to this Preface, and that is, to thank my Publishers for the kind attention they have given to the subject-matter of the work, for the Christian spirit they have evinced toward it, and for their very able discernment and appreciation of what was "genuine."

CIRCUMSTANCES have occurred since this Preface was written, which demand that I should add one line more—one in which is involved a very important inquiry, both to myself and to the cause of Christ. It is this: that now, before the Church, and the world, I ask if any person or persons know any just cause why I should not be God's fit messenger of the awful proclamation set forth in this undertaking; that if I have been *unscriptural*, or unchristian in word, or deed, they are to come forward and proclaim it *openly*; for that I am quite prepared to meet, and answer openly every accusation that can be brought against me.

August 1, 1861.

CHAPTER I.

THE MINISTRY OF JOHN THE BAPTIST.—SPIRITUAL ISRAEL.

THE time of Christ's advent was a transition period, not only a transit of a Heavenly Body, of "the Day Star from on high" to earth, but it was also a transition period for the true Church. She then, as it were, passed the disc of the Sun of Righteousness, and reflected his glory. He himself designated this period "the regeneration."

And thus it is, that in the New Testament we come into new life, new light, or rather, new in degree. Before this period, it could be said and written, "a man in whom the Spirit of God is." (Gen. xli. 38.) "I have filled Bezaleel with the Spirit of God, in wisdom, and in understanding, and in knowledge." (Ex. xxxi. 3.) "Take thee Joshua, a man in whom is the Spirit." (Num. xxvii. 18.) "I am with you, saith the Lord of hosts: according to the word that I covenanted with you when ye came out of Egypt, so my Spirit remaineth among you: fear ye not." (Hag. ii. 4, 5.) "Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts." (Zech. iv. 6.) And hence a revelation of a spiritual

nature, of "the invisible God." But in the New Testament we come into ratified relationship to God, into his kingdom, may I say, into legal existence with Him; "God was manifest in the flesh." "The life was manifested, and we have seen it." "To as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God." "Now we are the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be." Yes, I say, in the New Testament we come into new knowledge of God, into nearer relationship to God the Spirit. "God is a Spirit," was one of the first proclamations of "the Lord from heaven," who came to be "a quickening Spirit." The people had seen his glory in the Temple; his presence went with them, and his holiness passed by, that they beheld it; but they had never heard that Divine announcement which was so incomprehensible to flesh and sense, "God is a Spirit," a Being uncreated, self-existent; all power, all light, truth, holiness, justice, and love; a Being all life, "the life was manifested;" a Being of all generations, of a nature stretching from eternity to eternity. The Alpha and the Omega girds the circle of the deep, unfathomable past, and of the deep, unsearchable future. "It is he that sitteth upon the circle of the earth, and the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers; that stretcheth out the heavens as a curtain, and spreadeth them out as a tent to dwell in."

Oh! how can I grasp my subject? St. John said it was his mission to show unto the world that life. "And truly our *fellowship* is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus

Christ." The New Testament is the Father's will of life, in consequence of the death of his Son; He is the Testator. "I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed me." Now, as Christ said, "My kingdom is not of this world," his own nature in the hearts of his people must be what is to be universally restored. "One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all." (Eph. iv. 6.) Christ, the alone "Author of life," is, and must ever be, the fountain and source of this volume of spiritual life to our world; and hence the Psalmist could write of Him, "His going forth is from the end of the heaven, and his circuit unto the ends of it." (Ps. xix. 5, 6.)

But how is this perfect restoration to be brought about? I think, by glancing first at the character and mission of John the Baptist as the herald of the Bridegroom, the Head of the Church, of "the Lord of life," we shall see how it is to be done; he came forth as morning heralds the day, as the grey twilight heralds the greater splendour. As we see him, we understand the figurative language, "In them hath he set a tabernacle for the sun." (Ps. xix. 4—6; John iii. 29.)

I know in the archives of heaven was laid up the very time of the Messiah's advent (Dan. ix. 25, 26); that John, too, was foreseen there, and prophesied of from hence; but this does not prove to me that they were not two begotten powers of time, begotten in the womb of affliction, in an age of the faithful few, when they were purified, and made white, and tried, as all the lights of our world have emanated

from the darkest clouds. Let us watch for a moment the lesser light till we see it lost in that of day, embosomed eternally in God.

The first chapter of St. Luke presents to us at once the sacred precinct in which the holy man was born, and his Redeemer begotten into the world. At that time the world was dead in trespasses and sin, the true Church had allied herself to Rome, temporal power triumphed over the spiritual, and but for the little family of God gathered round the holy altar of his house, his name in this world might have been put out for ever. See the sacred group as it is presented to us in the Divine record.

“There was a certain *priest* named *Zacharias*; and his wife was of the daughters of *Aaron*. And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless. And it came to pass, that while he *executed the priest's office before God*, an angel appeared to him, and announced that he should have a son. He shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink: and he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb. And many of the children of Israel shall he turn to the *Lord* their *God*. And he shall go before *him* in the spirit and power of *Elias*.” If we would see and know the faithfulness of God, I would say remain faithful in his service in the means of grace, even under the hidings of his face, when surrounded by the most unpropitious circumstances, as *Zacharias* and

Elisabeth did. Man's extremity is God's opportunity. But I would ask here, what was the connection between the ministry of Elijah and that of John? "He shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias." Christ so connected the two, as to say, "From the days of John the Baptist until now, the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent taketh it by force," signifying, from the days of Elijah, for John was then living; and then He added, "If ye will receive it, this is Elias which was for to come" (Matt. xi. 12—14); referring to the words of the prophet Malachi, "Behold I will send you Elijah the prophet, before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord." (Mal. iv. 5.) But how can we reconcile this seeming contradiction? When it was asked John, "Art thou Elias?" he saith, "I am not." (John i. 21.) Then how was it that he was Elijah, and yet not Elijah? John was "the spirit and power of Elias." Elijah was the representative of the order of the prophets; of a more spiritual order when the service of the Temple lay a ruin; and John was the representative of a more spiritual order when the Temple was to be razed to the dust, the Jewish Church expelled, and the true Church purified by great affliction; and hence the prophecy, that the same "Spirit of truth" should again appear, and speak, "before the great and dreadful day of the Lord." It was "the Spirit of truth" in John, which made him one and the same person with Elias in the sight of God; and of Him whose Presence John came to herald, who was "the truth."

"I am *the voice* of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord." (John i. 23.) And thus it was Christ said of him, "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear." (Matt. xi. 15.) And again, "John, he bare witness unto the truth. He was a burning and a shining light," simply signifying a vessel of the Holy Ghost. "He shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb." The seven lamps of the Tabernacle and of the Temple supplied the metaphor of the figurative language, "A burning and a shining light." The more spiritual vision given to John, supplies us with still further illustration of the subject. "The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches" (Rev. i. 20), that is, the seven spirits of God are in the messengers sent. (Rev. i. 4; ii. 1; iii. 1; iv. 5.)

How reproachful, and yet how beautiful, the voice of Christ, "Ye were willing for a season to rejoice in his light." (John v. 35.) How often does he raise up and send forth "a burning and a shining light." For a season it is rejoiced in. It is "the Spirit of truth." It speaks; it is heard, seen, felt; it radiates a whole neighbourhood. But very soon "John's disciples" begin to question him, to pretend to scorn the lesser light, because they aspire to the greater. John might commend them; but the great Founder of the Christian Church would say, with seeming reproach, "Ye were willing for a season to rejoice in his light;" "he that despiseth you despiseth me." And hence, too, the emphatic injunction seven times repeated, "He that hath an ear, let

him hear what the Spirit saith unto the Churches." (Rev. ii. 7, 11, 17, 29; iii. 6, 13, 22.) Perhaps the injunction of Christ to the disciples of John, was the root of these injunctions. (Matt. xi. 15.)

This divine and peculiar connexion of the ministry of John with that of Elijah, should teach us how, in Scripture, individuals represent bodies, economies, and communities. We have seen this in historic type, in the life of Moses and of David; and we shall see it later, in the history of Peter. God is one in all ages, the Alpha and the Omega, the true witness. And so the Church is one in all ages. Life is a divisibility with us, but it is a continuity with God. And here is the solution of what appears to us unjust and unequal in Him. The end is not here; the lost and the saved live still. Beyond the veil of flesh which curtains Him from our view here, they are witnesses for, and of Him. Cause and effect, reward and punishment, are going on. We cease to exist here, but it is still to live before God. Every redeemed spirit is an Elijah carried to heaven in a chariot of fire, one with God, to return, and still to be his ministering spirit in a St. John. "By one Spirit we are all baptized into one body." This explains to us all the seeming incongruity here. What is mysterious to us, is plain to God. The greatest honour He can put upon his servants is to be ministering angels of his. Christ's mission to this world was our example herein. Let us always remember it when we are disposed to murmur, and to have hard thoughts of

God ; we may, and we must be, crucified with Him ; we may be beheaded with John ; our spirits may ascend to heaven in a whirlwind, or in a chariot of fire, but they will be ministering spirits still ; spectres before our enemies, or angels to our friends,—to the heirs of salvation. “This is Elias which was for to come.” “Herod said, It is John, whom I have beheaded: he is risen from the dead.” It is an evil augur when “the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence.” Let us pray more that it may not be so, either from friends or enemies. “Wot ye not what the Scripture saith of Elias? how he maketh intercession to God against Israel.”

If you would see another example of the continuity of the hidden Church as one body, turn to one in the life of Jacob. “Jacob, Jacob, I am God, the *God of thy father*: fear not to go down into Egypt; for I will go down with thee into Egypt; and I will also surely bring thee up again.” (Gen. xlv. 2—4.) Jacob did never come up from Egypt, but when he was brought up to be buried in “the field of Macpelah, which Abraham bought for a possession of a burying place.” And yet “God is not a man that He should lie.” Jacob, that noble pillar of the true Church, was buried there. “And there they mourned, with a very great and very sore lamentation, *seven days*”—a type of the days of the humiliation of the body, before it “shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.”

“This is a grievous mourning to the Egyptians: wherefore the name of the place was called Abel-mizraim, which is

beyond Jordan." (Gen. l. 10, 11.) The designation really signified the mourning of the Egyptians in the valley of *waters*. The mourning cortège might be called Egyptians, because they had come up from Egypt, "spiritually called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified" (Rev. ii. 8) ; but they were not Egyptians. "The valley of waters" was theirs ; and God was faithful to his promise to Jacob : it was the I AM of the Exodus who had spoken : "The God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob : this is my name for ever, and this is my memorial unto all generations" (Exodus iii. 15) ; the Almighty Spirit, "the beginning and the end arched the realm of the dead ; in Him they were alive." "They which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, are equal unto the angels ; and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection. Now that the dead are raised, even Moses showed at the bush, when he calleth the Lord the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob ; for He is not a God of the dead, but of the living : for all live unto Him." (Luke xx. 35—38.)

I have shown you in the history of Jacob, that in going down into Egypt, he was a type of the true Church.

At this time, God is now saying to her as He said to him, "I am God, the God of thy father : fear not to go down into Egypt ; for I will go down with thee into Egypt ; and I will also surely bring thee up again." Oh ! chosen vessel of the Eternal Spirit ! you have nothing to fear ; fear not "the field of Macpelah," God will bring thee up again. "Before Abra-

ham was, I am." "He that cometh after me is preferred before me : for he was before me" (John i. 15—30) ; and " All live unto him."

But to return to the commission of John the Baptist. I think he was a begotten power of the little Church when she was in the dust, trodden down of the Gentiles, denied, and lauded over by the Antichrist of herself. Then the Holy Ghost so dwelt in the infant in the womb of its mother, that he "leaped for joy," when approached by the mother of his Lord. (Luke i. 15, 43, 44.) In this chapter, a volume of life seems to issue from the everlasting covenant ; a broad river of salvation to flow from "The word ;" "God willing more abundantly to show unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath : that by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie." In this 1st chapter of St. Luke, we see the two unchangeable things, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, by which it was impossible for God to lie : the one in the womb of Mary ; the other in John and in Elisabeth (Luke i. 41—45), who were then types of the new economy, of the spiritual dispensation, of the Church as the called, sanctified vessel of the Spirit.

Then, just as Abraham had been the Representative of the Promise, of a dispensation of covenant transaction with God, so John was the herald of Christ, of the truth in Him ; the representative of "the New Covenant" dispensation ; of the dispensation of the Spirit ; of that which had been prophesied of by all the prophets. (Jer. xxxi. 31, 33, 37, 39 ; Ezekiel

xxxvi. 26, 27.) “*Grace and Truth* came by Jesus Christ.” See this in the marvellous prophecies of Elisabeth, Mary, and of Zacharias. (Luke i.) As we read those scriptural and lofty inspirations of the Spirit, do we not understand how all the spiritual powers of our world have been begotten powers? “This is He that came by water and blood, Jesus Christ; not by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth.” (1 John v. 6.) *

The sin of unbelief in Zacharias strikes us here as horrible sin against the abounding grace of the Spirit. With that canopy over his head, and with Christ the chief corner-stone for a foundation, how could he disbelieve the angel sent? How could a shadow of unbelief creep over his fervent spirit? “Behold, thou shalt be dumb, because thou believest not my words.” Oh, let us beware how we provoke the judgment of God; unbelief is now the only original damning sin that we have anything to do with. (Mark xvi. 16; John xvi. 9.) It always dishonours God, strikes us dumb, and gives to Satan the victory. It is true the dumbness of Zacharias was not unto death; time convinced him of sin, and at the end of the time he “was filled with the Holy Ghost, and prophesied.” Still we must confess that the faith of Mary stands forth before us in broader, fairer lines; in more uninterrupted, vital consequence. “*Blessed* is she that believed: for there shall be a performance of those things which were told her

* This verse is fully explained in its place.

from the Lord. And Mary said, My soul doth magnify the Lord; and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour." (Luke i. 45—47.) Such faith as hers is always *blessed*: it was rooted in the sacred writings, and her laudatory song was of the in-dwelling Spirit. Oh! how I love the blessings of Scripture! they are so vital, so conquering, of God—they are God. *

But I must inquire here, Of what order of priesthood was John the Baptist? Of the family of Abia, and of the house of Aaron; but there he dropped his ecclesiastical rank, and adopted all the paraphernalia of a spiritual order, all the vestments of body, mind, and spirit that could set forth that order. We never find him in the Temple, like his father Zacharias, burning incense before the Lord. No, like his great progenitor, he came to tell of the spiritual Temple that was to rise by the Spirit of God through Christ—"Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts." (Zech. iv. 6.) Could such an order of priesthood fail? No, their Head is made to them, for ever, "the power of an endless life," and they still live. Josephus tells us, a Zachariah—and doubtless of this same house with Zechariah and Zacharias—was murdered by the zealots in the Temple in the year of Christ 67; and many commentators have thought that this was the Zacharias, son of Barachias, mentioned prophetically by our Saviour in Matt. xxiii. 35, and in Luke xi. 51; so that we see how the One Eternal Spirit, or, "the

• They are more fully explained later.

seven spirits before the throne," is always the delegated messenger, whoever may be the servant in whom He is sent: "I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me." (Mal. iii. 1.) And so still, whenever Christ is coming; whenever God is about to speak, whether in judgment, or as a deliverer, He sends his messenger. (Dan. ix. 21.) "The seven stars are the angels of the seven Churches." God may send by a Noah, an Abraham, a Jacob, a Moses, an Aaron, an Elijah, a Zacharias, a John; but by all He is saying, "Hear what my Spirit saith unto the Churches."

"The same John had his raiment of camel's hair, and a leathern girdle about his loins; and his meat was locusts and wild honey." The clothing of skin betokened the prophet who was to proclaim the one Sacrifice for sin. (Zech. xiii. 14; Gen. iii. 21; Heb. xi. 37.) The "girdle about his loins" symbolized "the Spirit of Truth" which dwelt in him. "Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning." (Luke xii. 35.) And his food, the sanctity of the consecration vow which was upon him. His name, John—so named of the angel—signified the grace, gift, and mercy of the Lord. He was the first in Scripture so called. He did usher into the world the Truth, in whom was the grace and gifts of the new covenant dispensation.

But let us look for a moment at the character of John's preaching. "In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judea, and saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." Mark well the first

word of that antecedently *blessed* ministry (Luke i. 16), "Repent." It is because we have not adequate views of the foul, leprous nature of sin that we do not repent. God will never leave his people nor this world at ease in sin ; in his holiness and justice, He will pass by till they are convinced of sin, till it be seen, felt, hated, and consumed by the brightness of his coming, destroyed by his glory, which is essential holiness. (Ezek. xxxiii. 18—22 ; Rom. vi. 4 ; Ps. xxiv. 7—10.) "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." The Divine Presence was then so near at hand, the "Divine nature," peace, and reconciliation so guaranteed to the world, through Christ, that, had they been received, the world would now have been saved. The kingdom of God was at hand.

"Bring forth, therefore, fruits meet for repentance." Could we now see the fruits of *repentance*, and the fruits of *darkness*, and of spiritual *death*, of that which the Apostle calls "the unfruitful works of darkness," to say nothing of the works of unrighteousness, I believe the sight would appal and paralyze the flesh ; and hence the Divine wisdom, "That the shame of thy nakedness do not appear."

"Think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our Father : for I say unto you that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham." (Matt. iii. 9.) We see here how damnably the heretical doctrine of *succession* had taken possession of the Jewish, of the pharisaical mind. Christ exposed its depths, its Satanic hold, even onward to

present time, in most awful figure, "In hell he lift up his being in torments, . . . and he cried and said, *Father Abraham, have mercy on me.*" (Luke xvi. 23, 28.) And as we know that that rich man represented the Jewish priesthood, then about to be expelled, and as we hear him say, "I have *five brethren*, send Lazarus to them, lest they also come into this place of torment," does it not tell us how damnable too is the doctrine of apostolical succession? Lazarus might not be sent to tell, but Moses and the prophets were sent to tell of coming judgments for sin; and if they would not hear them, "neither would they be persuaded though one rose from the dead."

How apt and forcible was the teaching of the prophet John, "God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham." The world was, as it were, ready to wake into existence; the feet of the Son of God then trod our earth, and she was, as it were, ready to wake up from her groan and travail, into eternal restitution, and her very stones into the glorious liberty of the children of God.

"Now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire." This is the very fire in which the rich man, the Jewish Church, now lifts up her eyes; and, therefore, surely her sister, the Christian Church, should beware lest, if God spared not the natural branches, He should not spare her. The axe was then laid to the root of the trees. She was regenerated in faith and doctrine, and

her cry should ever have been, "I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but He that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire."

Two distinct baptisms are here set forth—with the Spirit of God, who was the blessing of the new covenant (Ezek. xxxvi. 26, 27; Jer. 31—34; Luke xxiv. 49.); and the baptism of the fire of the Word, of the Spirit of Truth. This distinction and agreement are clearly taught by Christ, and they should be preserved in our creed. (John iii. 5.) "There appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost." (Acts ii. 3, 4.)

The tenth of Ezekiel, where the man in priestly garments takes the coals of fire from between the cherubim, where the sacred writings were deposited, was the root of John's teaching in this symbol of fire.

"I indeed baptize you with water:" this had the same symbolical meaning as the baptism by fire. "The molten sea" of the Temple was for the priests to wash in, typical of the sea of divine truth, *i.e.*, of the Spirit of truth, in which, in their ministration, they were daily to be cleansed. "Sanctify them by thy truth: thy Word is truth." The sacred Jordan superseded the molten sea; there all the people might be buried with Christ in baptism (Matt. iii. 13), symbolical of the ocean of life and truth which came by Him,—of the fountain opened for sin and uncleanness by Him (1 Cor. x.

1—4; Eph. v. 26; John xv. 3.) Then every regenerate child of God became “an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices by Jesus Christ.” Oh, glorious intercessor, obtain for us this regeneration by “the living water” of thy Word! this baptism of the Holy Ghost and of fire, that we may indeed offer up spiritual offerings, acceptable to God by Thee.

How did this introductory preaching upon the subject of repentance and regeneration, open the way for the still deeper roots of the doctrine of Christ! “Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.” What a proclamation! What an assertion! What an amazing sweep of divine truth! Where had John learned it, in its broad, perfect, complete, and emphatic sense? “Again, the next day,” the same truth was affirmed before two of his disciples, “Behold the Lamb of God.” “And they followed Jesus.” If we, like John, would gain converts to Him, our teaching must be as lucid, and our faith as absolute and as reliant as his.

“He that hath the bride is the bridegroom: but the friend of the bridegroom, which standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly, because of the bridegroom’s voice: this my joy, therefore, is fulfilled. He must increase, but I must decrease.” It seems almost impossible to fathom the depths and springs of life in John, which suggested this language. He stood by the side of the great Bridegroom, listening to his voice,—his friend, ready joyfully to serve him; but He arrogated no

superiority, no precedence in His favour,—the Bride was the Bridegroom's own ; the exalted position of Bridegroom was his own ; all that the waiting, humble friend desired was, that He might increase, and he decrease. Perhaps the marriage in Cana of Galilee had suggested this train of thought ; or, perhaps the ancient sacred writings supplied both teachers with matter for their subjects. (Jer. xxxii 38—40 ; Isa. lv. 3 ; Joel ii. 28, 29.)

“The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand. He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life ; and he that believeth not the Son, shall not see life ; but the wrath of God abideth on him.” (John iii. 29, 35, 36.) Thus faithfully did John fulfil his mission, both as the messenger sent to prepare the way of the Lord, and as the representative of the dispensation of the Spirit, of the confirmed covenant of life. The words of David strike us, as we read,—“Which covenant God made with Abraham, and his oath unto Isaac ; and confirmed the same unto Jacob for a *law*, and to Israel for an *everlasting* covenant.” (Psalm cv. 9, 10 ; 2 Sam. xxiii. 5 ; Heb. xii. 22—24.)

Christ said of John, “Among them that are born of women, there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist.” What nature, what mysterious greatness must that have been for God thus to estimate, and to pronounce it great ? The world, the executioner of John, and Herod saw no greatness ; but He saw “the inward man,” and declared there had been no greater. “He shall be great in the sight of the Lord.” “Notwithstanding, he that is least in the kingdom of heaven

is greater than he." Here Christ spake of Himself, signifying he who had made himself the least. How well can they who are great in the sight of the Lord, great in the kingdom of heaven, afford to make themselves the least, and of no reputation !

But I must now, for a moment, glance at another phase of John's character. Even that divinely-appointed instrument of God's purpose, he who had been filled with the Holy Ghost from his mother's womb, pronounced by Christ to be the greatest who had been born of women, "great in the sight of the Lord," when he was cast into prison by Herod, and his Master's cause was held in contempt and derision by the great of this world, even his faith sank under dejection and sorrow. "Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another?" How crestfallen, since we heard him say, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world !" The natural man will be a religious man while religion serves his purpose ; but if he be bereft of the glory of the world, it has then for him no more consolation to yield. But this was not the case with John. Doubtless, physical nature was prostrated, and, consequently, the mind and spirit depressed ; so that his spiritual vision was obscured, his faith shaken by the power of hell. In that moment of confused, conflicting elements, he did not then distinguish aright the true, hidden nature of the kingdom of God. He had lost sight of his own teaching, "He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire." He was crestfallen, because he had forgotten

the insignia of his order, "The keys of the kingdom of God." Had he plucked them out of his bosom, and plied them with skill and force, they would have opened any door in Doubting Castle.

His gracious Saviour would then give him ocular demonstration to meet his case. "Go, and show John again those things which ye do hear and see: the blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them. And *blessed* is he whosoever shall not be offended in me." As I have said before, I do more than love these Blesseds of Scripture. When will the world know, and learn to appreciate the glorious benediction of holiness, sanctity, and grace? When will the world distinguish between their spiritual nature, and the mere gifts of temporal favour? (Gen. xvii. 20.) When will vain-glorious man learn not to be offended at the *superior* benediction? (Gen. xvii. 7 and 19.) This was still St. John's, even in prison, although he had not then faith enough to estimate its *superiority*.

No sooner had the disciples of John departed with their message, than Jesus began to point out to the multitude the sinfulness of his shaken, wavering mind,—“What went ye out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken with the wind?” Oh, it is well that we have the stronger, over-towering mind and spirit to reprove, and to encourage us; to lift us up when we fall, to set us right when we err,—when we falter. We are all reeds shaken with the wind; but if we

would look stedfastly to Him in his life, it would not be so. He never flinched ; He laid down his life, and took it again. This is the greatest victory on spiritual record ; and in Him, we may follow Him, and triumph in Him.

Here are the two greatest witnesses of the truth in the world's history, the one beheaded, and the other crucified ; but both *blessed*, both born to rise from the sleep of death to glory and immortality. Their spectres ever rose up before their murderers a ghastly sight. "John have I beheaded : but who is this ?" "This is John the Baptist, he is risen from the dead." (Luke ix.) "Ye intend to bring this man's blood upon us." (Acts v. 28.) Did we really know our spiritual alliance with Christ, we should never fear for ourselves or for his cause ; but fight manfully under his banner to establish his kingdom, even unto death. "He that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live."

I think the two chapters which tell us of the death of John, and his disciples coming to Christ to make known to Him the deed of blood, read together, are two of the most affecting and lofty in the four Evangelists, if we may venture to have a human opinion, or to make at all any such selection. (Matt. xiv. ; Mark vi. from the 29th verse.) "His disciples came, and took up the body, and buried it, and went and told Jesus." This is the real intention of all earthly losses, to send us to Jesus. Let the disciples of John always be our example herein. "When Jesus heard of it, he departed thence by ship into a desert place apart : and when the people had heard

thereof, they followed him on foot out of the cities." (Matt. xiv. 12, 13.) St. Mark says :—" The Apostles gathered themselves together unto Jesus, and told him all things. And he said unto them, Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest a while." His soul was too moved, too deeply afflicted, the deep of life was too stirred within longer to commune with men, " For there were many coming and going." That faithful martyr for the truth (Rev. ii. 13) saw in the beheaded John, not only the messenger to prepare his way, but also the foreshadow of his own martyrdom,—a type of the long line of witnesses who, like him, were to seal their testimony by their blood: and, as that cloud of witnesses stood in array before him, He fled away into a desert place alone to pray; to calm the troubled spirit that swelled and heaved within, by communion with his God, " the Father of Spirits."

Perhaps for twenty years or more they had studied together the sacred page; perhaps the two students had together read the past,—the two prophets together read the future. Perhaps they had scanned together the pellucid surface of revelation; perhaps together they had dived its depths. How, in brotherhood and in friendship, would this unite the two! How would the one sympathize with the other in their distinct missions! How would they look forward to journeying on to the other end of the journey of life together! The Bridegroom would mourn when this friend was taken from him.

I have often contemplated "the Son of man" in that

desert place apart. How fearful and chilly is the horror which sudden and tragical death casts over the spirits; but there He reflected not only on this; He saw in one diabolical deed, a foreshadow of the future; He saw there the black side of the world's history,—the dark, bloody conflict of the Church. The midnight solitude added darkness to the appalling conflict. John, the forerunner of the God of Israel, was dead. The bloody conflict and murderous death of that God-man drew on; that on which was suspended the salvation or the damnation of the world. Well might his disciples come to him, and say, "This is a desert place!"

We read, "great multitudes followed him. And when Jesus saw them, he was moved with compassion toward them, because they were as sheep not having a shepherd: and he began to teach them many things." His disciples, thinking to relieve Him of a labour and of an oppression of spirit, which they saw weighing heavily upon Him, said, "Send the multitudes away." But how calm the answer! how full of heavenly design! They need not depart: "give ye them to eat."

"And they say unto him, We have here but five loaves and two fishes. He said, Bring them hither to me." Then occurred the miracle of the "five thousand men, beside women and children," being fed with them. Let us never consider the smallness of the means committed to our trust. "Bring them to me." Jesus can *bless* them, and make them enough. They need not depart.

tossed with waves, and the wind contrary ; there her faith will be exercised, her love tried. " Oh thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt ? " And in that *fourth* watch of the night, when the cry shall issue from every heart, and echo through every round, " Watchman, what of the night ? Watchman, what of the night ? " the Divine voice will answer, " Be of good cheer ; it is I. " Oh, thou great cloud of the witnesses of Jesus ! Oh, ye ministers of Him who do his pleasure ! Oh, thou Church of the firstborn whose names are written in heaven, fear not " the desert place apart," and " the mountain apart ; " Jesus has been there, and has consecrated them for thee ; He will pass by, and meet with thee there. " The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad ; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose. Make straight in the desert a highway for our God. " Fear not the midst of the sea, the tossing of the waves, nor the wind contrary ; Jesus himself has grappled with the deep, with the floods, and the billows, and the waves in the midst of the seas (Jonah ii.) ; and He will meet with thee there : " Be of good cheer ; it is I. "

It is very remarkable that in the next chapter (Matt. xv.), we find Jesus working the same miracle under the typical, mystical number *seven* : signifying the Church fed by the bread of life during the seven dispensations—" He took the *seven* loaves. And they took up of the broken meat that was left *seven* baskets full. And they that did eat were four thousand men, beside women and children. "

Immediately after these miracles, and this dark foreshadow of the Church's future conflict, we find Christ instituting the Apostolic Church. (Matt. xvi.) And I say this train of events and miracles is very remarkable; leading on, as they do, to *that* subsequent important event; the more so, as the disciples, and Peter particularly, were the persons who figured in them; and as we find Peter the representative of that Church, I say the solemn teaching is very striking. I am not going into the subject of the institution of that Church here, as I shall do so later.

The transfiguration vision is also a continuation of this train of events. "There appeared unto them Moses and Elias." If we examine this miraculous occurrence, we shall still find the teaching to be of the spiritual nature of the Church and of Christ's kingdom. "There be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom" (Matt. xvi. 28); referring to the Pentecost, which was a manifestation of his kingdom." (Rom. xiv. 17.) "And after six days Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into an high mountain apart, and was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light. And, behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elias." (Chap. xvii.) Picture the little group upon that mountain apart, Christ transfigured in his own eternal, native robe of essential holiness and light, that is, in glory: Moses and Elias also in that glory. (Rom. vi. 4; viii. 11.) Peter, James, and John, witnesses of the glo-

rious estate of the redeemed. Well might the representative of the Christian Church desire to remain there, to build three churches there: "It is good for us to be here." But well might the sacred penman add, "not knowing what he said." (Luke ix. 33.) That was not the design of the vision; on the contrary, it was to inspire and to assure the Church for that conflict which lay before her, and which they had themselves witnessed so black a foreshadow of. That it was, indeed, Elijah who stood upon that mountain there can be no doubt; but Christ had said that John was Elijah, and here we find him asserting the same thing. (Matt. xvii. 10—12; Mark ix. 13.) "The Spirit of truth" in the two prophets had borne witness of the truth; and the disciples also must be like instruments of his purpose, temples of his presence, to make known the manifold grace of God. Oh, how do we mistake our commissions, and the real existence of things as they are, and all from not forming adequate conceptions of the foul, deep, awful nature of sin, and of the holiness and justice of God! Not only must John die by the hand of the devil—"he was a murderer from the beginning"—for the exhibition of its true nature to all worlds; but "the Holy One" must also die by that hand, to exhibit, and to cancel it. "Elias is come already, and they have done unto him whatsoever they listed. Likewise shall also the Son of man suffer of them." (Matt. xvii. 12.) It matters not whether we go to heaven in a chariot of fire, or whether we are beheaded like John, crucified as was Christ, and Peter; we are to bear witness of the truth; and whatever other

testimony we bring, it will only be said of us, "Not knowing what he said."

Christ, by such ocular manifestation as this, would show to his disciples that the inner life of the Church never dies; that the family of heaven and earth are one; that, although she might suffer affliction and martyrdom, she still lives; the little group upon an high mountain apart—Peter, James, John, Moses, and Elias—were all of the true Church,—“Whosoever liveth and believeth in me, shall never die.” The great Head of the Church condescended to give to her still further instruction: “As they came down from the mountain, he charged them that they should tell no man what things they had seen, till the Son of man were risen from the dead. And they kept that saying with themselves, questioning one with another what the rising from the dead should mean.” (Mark ix. 10.) Not only after his resurrection did He solve to them this question, but after his ascension we find Him again inspiriting them, by directing their attention to his own bodily presence with them, to this doctrine of life beyond death. (Rev. i. 18; ii. 8.)

The ministries of Elijah and John were one; they were representatives of a more spiritual economy; of the promised blessing of the New Covenant,—the Third Person in the Holy Trinity; of the kingdom of God, which is in righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. Having glanced at the true nature of them, I shall now pass on to the ministry of Christ.

CHAPTER II.

THE ADVENT AND TEMPTATION OF CHRIST.

THE writings of the four Evangelists stand before us in their Divine sameness as the mind of the same Eternal Spirit, and still in their truthful distinction as the works of four different instruments. Their human missions were pre-ordained of God, foretold by Him. By way of encouragement to Zechariah when he deplored the ruin of the temple, and the desolation which lay around him, he could say,—“The Lord showed me four carpenters.” (i. 20.) These reared the scaffolding, the framework by which the spiritual temple was to rise. The prophet might be cast down; but God would work in his own time. And, so again, the vision of four chariots. (vi. 1—5.) They represented four ambassadors sent upon important missions; and when we are told, “They came out from between two mountains, and the mountains were mountains of brass,” it tells us at what cost, through what seas of blood and strife revelation was given to our world: the mountains might have referred to the Romish and Jewish allied powers. The prophecy of Ezekiel refers to the New Testament writers:—“Behold, six men came from the way of

the higher gate, and every man a slaughter weapon in his hand ; and one man among them was clothed in linen, with a writer's inkhorn by his side." (ix. 2—4.) This *one* was Christ, the Author and God Incarnate of Revelation ; the six men were Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, St. Paul, and St. Peter ; so that only two of the minor writers, St. James and St. Jude, were not prophesied of by that ancient prophet. All heaven looked forward to this increase of Revelation of spiritual power (Ezek. i. and x.) ; and surely this should increase our appreciation and gratitude for the glorious orb of light committed to us,—“The *life* was the light of men.”

In the writings of St. Matthew and St. Mark there is a simple, calm narration of events and of our Saviour's ministry. St. Luke is more deep, bold, and fervent ; St. John more spiritual ; but by each of the four writers the great facts of the work of redemption are given to us, in a manner at once concise, plain, bold, and solemn. The humanity of Christ is a teaching so prominent throughout the four books, that not to give it its parallel orbit with his divinity, not to preserve sacred the duplex natures, would be to throw confusion into his work, to do violence to truth ; and instead of thereby giving prominence to the God, the Godhead, which is so glorious in the distinction, would only be obscured by a nature not duly recognised. Christ's human ministry, as *the* example to his servants to all future ages, is so important that we must receive it as it stands in all its

native distinctiveness, unfallen strength, and moral glory. Then the work of "the mighty God, the everlasting Father," will too be seen in its true and distinct glory.

I do not think, as some do, that there was no record preserved by the Apostolic Church in convocation;—the tenor of the four Gospels exhibit such roots; and there can be no doubt that in the institution of the Church something would be appointed to do the work of the Sanhedrim, and of the Lesser Council of twenty-five members. There were bishops (Acts i. 20) and deacons; and I think the Inspired Word was the Holy Oracle where they were to meet, to deliberate, and to consult God. He is incarnate there; He is always to preside; He was supposed to do so in the Council of the Seventy Elders; and when He called the Apostles, He did not leave them without a "counsellor." (Isa. ix. 6.) No; He presided in his Word.* And there met the Council, the Church.

The opening words of the Gospel of St. Luke affirm that there was such Convocation. "Forasmuch as many have taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration of those things which are most surely believed among us, even as they delivered them unto us, which from the beginning were eyewitnesses, and ministers of the Word; it seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write unto thee in order, most excellent Theophilus." By this, it is evident, matter had been collected

* See my Explanation of Ezek. viii. 11; xi. 1, 2.

by the Church ; but each book bears so legibly the stamp of the writer's own mind, the conclusions of his own observations, and the life interest which he himself had therein, all so unanimous, and yet so unique, that the voices, although four, are but one—that of the One Eternal Spirit.

The Gospel of St. John differs very essentially from the other three. He was the beloved and chosen disciple to receive the choicest revelation of God in Christ. By nature and by grace he seems to have been of a meek and quiet spirit ; in the performance of his work, his mind became almost etherealized, as we gather from his heavenly-minded Epistles. The Revelation shows us a soul and spirit still more transcendent ; and we know how he was chosen of God to write that farseeing, Divine prophecy, "Then went this saying abroad among the brethren, that that disciple should not die : yet Jesus said not unto him, He shall not die ; but, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee ?" (John xxi. 23.) And how vast and sublime must have been the conception of his soul, how numberless must have been the facts which he witnessed, to have summed up the whole with this remarkable record, "Many other things Jesus did, the which, should they be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written. Amen." This was not a childish affirmation of St. John. I believe if the mind of the Spirit in the ministry of Christ, and in Revelation, could be transposed and translated, "even the world itself could

not contain the books that should be written." These were the depths the Spirit of God in him sounded.

One of my objects in this undertaking has been to trace the river of salvation from Eden, till it flows into the ocean of eternity. In the beginning of the Gospel of St. Luke, all the floodgates of that mighty torrent seem opened, and it is seen coursing in its patriarchal, uninterrupted grandeur from the source where it rose (Gen. iii. 15), on to its broader flow, "to be a God unto thee" (Gen. xvii. 7), till here it is seen, in its majestic expansiveness, an overflowing, wide-spread flood of life. See this in the songs of Elisabeth, Mary, and Zacharias. While, as we have seen, St. Matthew enters at once upon the momentous facts he had seen and heard,—the birth of Christ, and the events of his ministry.

But before proceeding, I must here glance for a moment at the introduction of that Divine Being into the world. He was announced by an angel; named Jesus, "for he shall save his people from their sins;" "Emmanuel, God with us."

The inquiry of the Magi in the streets of Jerusalem, must have been a startling one, "Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him." (Matt. ii. 2.) Mark here, "*his star.*" Neither the Jewish Church, nor profane history, tell us of any one of the heavenly bodies being called "*his star!*" The record as left by St. Matthew and St. Luke, explains the phenomenon. His star was, doubtless, the same "angel of

his presence" that we read of throughout the Old Testament. (Exodus xiv. 19, 20; xxiii. 20, 21; Isa. lxiii. 9; Num. xxiv. 17; Amos v. 26.) I think these wise men were a remnant of the schools of the prophets; and that those schools originated in, or rather, the *idea* of forming such schools rose out of, the Chaldean schools of philosophy. The magicians and Chaldeans were called wise men. (Gen. xli. 8; Exodus vii. 11.) And so we read of prophetesses being called wise women. (2 Sam. xiv. 2; xx. 16.) Balaam was an astrologer, or one of the so termed wise men of some school of philosophers,—a priest of some order, an imitation of the priests of God. (Num. xxii. 40; xxiii. 1—4; Obad. 8.) I think the *designation* of the Magi, "wise men," rose out of the order of Chaldean philosophers. (2 Kings xxii. 14; 2 Chron. xxxiv. 21, 22.) We may justly infer that the Redemption Star which guided the Church out of Egypt and through the Red Sea, in which was the angel of the Covenant (Exod. xiv. 19, 20), had been watched by the Chaldeans as it hovered over her forty years,—a pillar of fire by night, a cloud, but a glorious canopy of grace, by day; and that, when the Spirit of God came upon Balaam to pronounce a blessing upon the holy people when he would have pronounced a curse, employed language which should be suggestive to him of the future, from that which was then witnessed by them, "There shall come a star out of Jacob" (Num. xxiv. 2—17), and the Antitype Star, Deliverer, did come; and as we look back, we feel how beautifully

suggestive was the type,—what a sermon, what a voice of the Spirit was it to the heathen world, as they watched its prophetic glory so attentively and so long; and as they received the signification of it from God Himself! It is very probable an account of that star was chronicled in the records of those schools; a divine phenomenon, and not one of the heavenly bodies; and that a tradition was received into the schools of the prophets, and handed down by that body to the time of Christ. When the Church had fallen into idolatry, when her canopy of grace was smitten, that it withered; when the typical service was no longer her guiding star to glory, it is possible she remembered her privilege, and worshipped a star of lesser glory in its stead, perhaps, herself. (Amos v. 26; Acts vii. 23.) But the believing few made no such mistake, “We have seen his star, and we come to *worship him.*”

And thus do we find Christ represented under the same figure in the Apocalypse, “A star, a great star; the bright and morning star.” This last beautiful idea was suggested, probably, from the Church in the “great and terrible wilderness,” when, as she woke each morning, she lifted up her eyes, and beheld “the angel of his presence, a bright and morning star,” still her guiding, guardian angel, and her canopy of grace. Are we of the believing few who know this privilege, who go forth on the journey of the day, encircled within the arch of covenant grace? Oh, blessed waking! glorious progress!

Hence, the sweet, bright emblem was conferred upon the Church herself, and hence the glorious constellation of seven stars in the right hand of her Redeemer and her Head. (Rev. i. 16—20 ; ii. 1 ; iii. 1.)

I think as we examine the record of the Evangelists, we shall find “ his star,” seen by the wise men, to have been the same “ angel of the covenant ” sent to announce the Divine Person that covenant embodied. Read the record as given by St. Luke. “ There were shepherds in the field, keeping watch over their flock *by night*. And, lo, the angel of the Lord *came upon* them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them : and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them, Unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.” (Luke ii. 8—14.) This angel was Gabriel (Luke i. 9—26) ; the very same who announced the Messiah to Daniel four hundred years before. (Dan. viii. 16 ; ix. 21, 24—26.) He was the chief of the royal squadron who appeared to the shepherds ; and, doubtless, he was, too, the guiding star of the Magi, from the horizon of the east into the streets of Jerusalem, to inquire “ Where is he that is born *King* of the Jews ? for we have seen his star.” In the prophecy of Balaam, there is both the sceptre and the star. (Num. xxiv. 17.)

And here, too, is solved the difficulty of the duplexity of the seven stars. (Rev. i. 20.) Christ was God and man ;

and the seven stars, or angels, were men, or temples of the "seven spirits," or of the one Eternal Spirit. The present ministry of the Gospel succeeded to the ministry of Christ, as his ministry superseded that of these elect angels. We see this beautifully set forth by St. Paul, in the first and second chapters of Hebrews. The seven stars signify the Divine delegated third Person in the Holy Trinity, and the seven angels signify the human delegated body. But so completely are they one, that in Rev. iii. we find the stars representing the human body.

The earnest cry of inquiry of these wise men in the streets of Jerusalem is a singular fulfilment of the prophecy of Balaam; for it is clear they did not even know that the King of the Jews was to be born in Bethlehem, "There came wise men from the *east* to Jerusalem, saying, Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the *east*." Perhaps they were a few of the faithful who inhabited the dens and caves of the locality where Balaam had dwelt: "Balak hath brought me from the mountains of the *east*." (Num. xxiii. 7.) And the tradition had remained in the hands of a remnant of the schools of the prophets, although the sun of the spirit of prophecy had set four hundred years before. Did I say, tradition?—why not the Sacred Record itself?

"Behold, the glory of the God of Israel came from the way of the *east*, and the earth shined with his glory." (Ezek. xliii. 1—4; xliv. 2, 3.)

"And, lo, the star which they saw in the *east*, went before

them, till it came and stood over where the young child was. When they saw the star they rejoiced with exceeding great joy." This was not at all the movement of a natural star; no, I believe it was the Angel of the Covenant,—of Christ's presence announcing Him; and, doubtless, the angels will herald Him in his second advent: "Then shall appear the *sign* of the Son of man in heaven." (Matt. xxiv. 30.) Different language is employed, but the whole is the voice of the Spirit.

The royal gifts to the wise men,—gold, and frankincense, and myrrh,—evidenced the truth, that the promised royal Son of the house of David had come into the world. It is very remarkable that Gabriel should, too, have announced John, "I am Gabriel, that stand in the presence of God." (Luke i. 19.) But as we see the divinely-ordained messenger, and these elect angels,—squadrons of angels,—we feel overawed before the Divine Presence, and are sure that it was the One God, the Redeemer of the world, who entered our world. Then, before proceeding further upon the subject of his ministry, let us do as did the wise men,—present our poor gifts of gold, and frankincense, and myrrh, and fall down and worship Him.

But where, at that time, was Herod, king of Judea? Pontius Pilate, the governor? Herod the tetrarch of Galilee? His brother Philip, tetrarch of Ituræa? (Luke iii. 1.) Why was not the intelligence of the heavenly phenomenon proclaimed at Rome?—made known to Tiberius Cæsar? Where were Annas and Caiaphas, the high priest? Why did not the glorious satellite hover over the Temple, as it did over the Magi,

the shepherds, and the manger, that it might be seen of all the pharisees, scribes, rabbis, and learned doctors there? Why had Herod to command, "Go, and search diligently for the young child," and the wise men obliged to return another way, to avoid giving the intelligence to that foul murderer, while the glory of the Divine Presence shone around him and his dominion,—while the Church of the living God was in a state of excitement, fear, and of exceeding great joy from open vision? Because to the one party, as to the Israelites of old, the star was light, and life, and health; but to the other, cloud and darkness, and an evil augur. (Exod. x. 22, 23.) In the land of Judea glory irradiated the believing Church; but to the host of Herod, the blackness of darkness obscured their vision. The words of St. Paul strike us as we read, "In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them." (2 Cor. iv. 4.) "If our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost." (iv. 3.)

St. Peter says,—“Until the day dawn, and the day-star arise in your hearts.” (2 Pet. i. 19.) Has that glorious “day-star” ever arisen in our hearts? Is it to us a pillar of fire by night, and a covering of cloud from the heat by day? Is it our guide from the mountains of the east to Jerusalem, where we meet with and worship the Lord of hosts? Is it to us glory,—the glory of the Lord shining round about us? Or is it, as to Pharaoh and to Herod, darkness and the shadow of death? “The day-star” of

earth's redemption is still hovering on the grey horizon of a brighter day ; the King of spiritual Israel and of the Jews is again to come. (Ezek. xxxvii. 24—27.) "I am the root and offspring of David, the bright and morning star." (Rev. xiii. 16.) "I am the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord." But there is intervening darkness and intervening glory, although to each and to all it is alike said, "To Him that overcometh, I will give the morning star." (ii. 26—28.)

I must now glance at the nature of the Being thus gloriously introduced into the world with so much gorgeous, Divine splendour, and without a vestige of human glory.

Mary was found with child of the Holy Ghost. (Matt. i. 18.) He shall be called the Son of the *Highest*. The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the *power of the Highest* shall overshadow thee : *therefore*, also, that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God." (Luke i. 33—35.) Mary was not immaculate ; the very laws of her nature were defiled, or she would not have had to offer the offerings of her purification, and to make an atonement according to the laws of Moses. If you compare Levit. xii. with Luke ii. 22—24, you will see that that sin-offering was for herself. Christ was then in the Temple consecrated priest of the Lord (Luke ii. 23 ; Exod. xxii. 29) ; but He was that holy thing "The Son of the *Highest*"—that is, of the Most Holy, begotten of Supreme, Essential Holiness. Till we understand the essential nature of holiness, we never can understand the supreme resource and omnipotence of God. This inherent native attribute is the law of Creation, the law

of life; it is the unforfeited law of life that contains in it infinite resource, omnipotent power: power to produce every possible thing it willeth. God exists by an absolute necessity of his own nature; this absolute necessity is holiness, glory: and holiness is life. This holiness, or life, is Cause; and thus it is that God has in himself radical existence to cause to exist whatever He will; a power to meet all exigency, whatever it may be. St. Paul seemed to understand this essential principle of holiness and life when he wrote, "Through faith the worlds were framed by the Word of God"—that is, through consciousness of inherent holiness, which is omnipotent life; and, therefore, the Omnipotent Word of God. And if believers One with Him would bring forth life, they must "live by faith." Christ's teaching was to this point, "What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive, and ye shall have." (Mark xi. 24.) And so of the immaculate conception of Christ: He was conceived by the Holy Ghost. "Begotten, not made." Begotten through faith; through the faith of the little waiting Church in God's unchangeable love; through faith in the promise of Him who was "The Holy One," and the defender of the holy. They knew Him to be Omnipotent—"Christ, the *power* of God."*

The law of flesh and blood there was in Him—"Flesh of the substance of the mother;" but the law of sin there was not, because He was "of the Holy Ghost," of the seed of essential holiness and life. I think I shall show you, in our

* See this fully explained later, in 1 John v. 6, Jesus Christ came by water and blood.

Saviour's conversation with Nicodemus, that the incorruptible seed of the Word of God (1 Pet. i. 23), or "the Spirit of Truth," was that tangible seed of essential holiness: the water of life, the life of God, which coalesced with blood—"The *Word* was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory"—which means holiness,—“the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.” (John i. 14.) “In Him was life,” the essential life of forfeited holiness.

I think herein was the only distinction in the second Person of the Holy Trinity from the human family; and herein is the unity of the Holy Trinity; for thus Christ was essentially God—"the everlasting Father, upheld by Him; dependent on Him." (Isa. xlii. 1.) Christ, through the Eternal Spirit, offered himself without spot to God (Heb. ix. 14); but so divinely consecrated, and so holy was the Temple, that it was to be henceforth the dwelling-place of all the fulness of God. (Col. i. 19; Rev. i. 8, 14—18; xxi. 3—22; xix. 16.) And still, even then, in that far future, we read, "His name is called the Word of God." (xix. 13—16.)

Thus we see, from God being essentially "The True" (Rev. xix. 11), the Holy, his Word, from the beginning, was God (John i.), life (vi. 63; 1 Pet. i. 23). Revelation is a power begotten into our world: the true Church is, too, a begotten power, and the spiritual travail will go on till "the Lord God omnipotent reigneth." "Shall I bring to the birth, and not cause to bring forth? saith the Lord. Shall I

cause to bring forth, and shut the womb? saith thy God." To deny inspiration, or the vitality of it, is to deny God. God is "the Spirit of Truth," and He will assert himself universally and everlastingly. I do not know why the progress of truth is so slow, save it be, that the spirit of error may be duly exhibited, and in memory be had in everlasting execration.

Thus we have seen that the Son was of the Father: even his human nature was essential holiness; and yet as distinct from the indwelling God as was the nature of the "First Adam" from his Creator: "the Father, that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works." (John xiv. 10.) "God was in Christ." (2 Cor. v. 19.) And hence the justifying righteousness of "the Second Adam," and a free salvation from a sovereign God. I love very much the expression, "God was *manifest* in the flesh." (1 Tim. iii. 16.) I do love to look at Him in Christ: benign, holy, tender, meek, glorious. Then I can see how, when the devil triumphed, he was vanquished; the Holy One rose because He could not see corruption; the empire of the devil fell because it was corrupt.

I must now turn to the ministry of this holy Being, God-man; like his nature, it was duplex—example and substitutional: "Hear ye Him." (Matt. xvii. 5.)

Where was He during the thirty years before He entered upon his public ministry? I do not think the consecrated High Priest, who of God was raised up to offer the one living sacrifice for the sin of the world, ever worked as a carpenter. (Heb. viii. 3.) He was not a type of a fallen being, who was

to eat bread by the sweat of his brow, but of the unfallen state; of Adam before he fell, or of man when he shall be restored to his primeval state. Of man when the earth shall again yield her increase without labour: his voice, and the whole tenor of his life led on to that restitution of all things; nor do we ever once find Him to be a link in the chain which binds to earth—"Labour not for the meat which perisheth. I have meat to eat that ye know not of." Some have thought, by his commending his mother to the care of John, that He had himself ministered to her support; but we know that during the three years of his public ministry He had not done so; He himself had not where to lay his head: and He had to work a miracle to pay tribute to Cæsar. It is not likely that Joseph was dead at the commencement of that ministry, or it would not have been inquired so relatively to the time then present, "Is not this the carpenter's son?" It is more probable that he died some time during the three years of that ministry.

In childhood, we find the mind of Christ absorbed in the subject of his great mission; his "Father's business" lay even then a ponderous mission upon the youthful mind; the sacred page had already told him, "Him hath God the Father sealed:" this weighty fact lay before Him in all its vitality, depth, extent, and infinite consequence. (John vi. 27.) His desire of knowledge in listening to the doctors, and asking them questions, tells us how, even then, his mind had opened to that great commission. And I believe the Scriptures alone

had made this revelation to Him in his distinct human nature. In that panoply of light, truth, and grace of the Spirit, He came forth as a strong man to run a race; He read himself, He read his mission, and He set his mind to do the will of Him who had sent Him. "He which is of God, He hath seen the Father." In the Scriptures the Son in his distinct humanity had seen the Father, his God, the High and Holy One (John xx. 17), about to gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth, even in Him, in Himself.

And thus it was that they were to Him always the rule of every action, the silken clue which guided Him through the labyrinth of his human existence, the rays of heaven which fell upon his path to guide his footsteps. As we read the four Gospels, his references to the ancient sacred writings at every turn in his ministry, or rather, I should say, as we see that ministry rooted in them, the truth must strike every reflective mind as one which stamps the Bible, vital as the work of the Spirit, logical as devised by the wisdom of God, and of deep, awful, and sublime importance as given to us by Him. I need only quote one or two passages to show how the mind of Christ comprehended the whole. "I know whom I have chosen: but that the *scripture may be fulfilled*, he that eateth bread with me hath lifted up his heel against me." (John xiii. 18; xv. 25; xvii. 12; xviii. 9.) "The Son of man shall be betrayed unto the chief priests and unto the scribes, and they shall condemn him to death, and shall

deliver him to the Gentiles to mock, and to scourge, and to crucify him: and the third day he shall rise again." (Matt. xx. 18, 19; viii. 17; xii. 16, 17; xiii. 35; xxi. 4.) "After this, Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the scripture *might be fulfilled*, saith, I thirst." (John xix. 28.) And the last words of his unglorified existence were from the Scriptures, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit." (Luke xxiii. 46.) The Scriptures were the rock on which the Anointed One, the Sent One, stood; on which He fought, conquered, fell, and rose again. And no servant of his who has taken up the same ground can ever fail; if we fall, not to rise, it is because in *word* or *deed* we are not scriptural. Eighteen years of study was the education-preparation for Christ's ministry, and a like study must be ours. It may go hand in hand with a public school, college, and classical education; but these may not supersede that. How difficult must have been his study, to search the written roll of the scribe! but his diligence never flagged; for how vast and comprehensive must have been his knowledge to walk by the silken clue, "It is written," "Have ye not read?" Oh, if we would walk by the same rule, what wrong turnings might we not avoid! what high, moral, and spiritual attainment might we not achieve! what lights to men might we not be!

Our glorious Reformation rose out of the little act of the monk of Wittemberg taking down the dusty Bible from the shelf; it was the weapon of his cause, his shield and defence,

the secret talisman of his victory. And hence all the glorious increase of light, and of conquest over the powers of darkness of the last three hundred years.

I do not say that there may not have been some mistranslations in the Bible, and absurd, even elaborate additions. (1 John ii. 23 ; Num. xxiv. 16 ; Rev. iv. 6, 7.) But better that even these should remain than that correction should fall into heedless, unskilful, I might almost say, into the hands of uninspired men.

The first thing that meets us in the ministry of Christ is his request to be baptized of John in the Jordan. Those who had been baptized of John, were baptized confessing their sins. "The Holy One" had no sin to confess. "Which of you convinceth me of sin?" (John viii. 46.) There was no fountain opened for sin and uncleanness for Him to wash in. "I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?" But still the holy rite could not be dispensed with. "Suffer me now ; for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness." (Matt. iii. 15.) This baptism in the Jordan was symbolical of the High Priest Christ washing in "the molten sea" of "the Spirit of Truth." "The sea was for the priests to wash in." (2 Chron. iv. 6.) "Let thy priests, O Lord God, be clothed with salvation." (vi. 41.) Could any other canonicals be so glorious ? First, to be washed in the liquid ocean of Divine Truth ; and then, from the cleansing wave, to emerge clothed with the glad tidings of salvation. But it may be said, John baptized the people, and not the priests

only; then all the people became "an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ."

And hence the early type, the cure of Naaman the leper by washing *seven* times in the Jordan. That river had then superseded the molten sea of the Temple; the one was a ruin, and hence this type in the ministry of Elisha. Naaman represented the whole body of the lost, priests and people; Elisha "the Prophet," Christ; the little captive maid might represent the little, true Church, always captive. Is she not always saying, "Would God my lord were with the prophet that is in Samaria! for he would recover him of his leprosy." And does not "my lord" come "with his horses and with his chariot, and stand at the door of the house of Elisha?" And does not Christ always answer him, "Go, and wash in Jordan"—in the molten sea of the Spirit of Truth—"seven times, and thy flesh shall come again to thee, and thou shalt be clean." Is there now any other fountain opened for sin and uncleanness? A lady said to me, following out the opinion of one of the most popular interpreters of prophecy, "I do not believe the people of God now upon earth will die, but that they will be caught up to meet Christ, and be ever with Him." What is this but declaring plainly, "Behold, I thought, he will surely come out to me, and stand, and call on the name of the Lord his God, and strike his hand over the place, and recover the leper"? The world may think Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the

waters of Israel ; the people may turn, and go away in a rage ; but they must come back to the tangible river of the Spirit of Truth, and there they may wash, and be clean. Servants of God, come near to the whole body, diseased with sin, and say, "My father!"—was not that leprous body *thy* father? "Thy father was an Amorite, and thy mother an Hittite."

"My father, if the prophet had bid thee do some great thing, wouldest thou not have done it? how much rather then, when he saith to thee, Wash, and be clean?" Oh! let the Church be more in earnest, more faithful in proclaiming the foul, deep leprosy there is to wash away; let her cry be humble, filial: "Would God, my lord were with the prophet that is in Samaria!" "My father." And let her not indulge the thought that He will strike his hand over the place, and recover the leper; He will do no such thing; He will go to the very root of the disease, probe it, lay it open, heal it. "Go, and wash in Jordan *seven* times," in the spirit of truth, "for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness."

The Jordan superseded the molten sea; and if you would see the true meaning of the early type, read 1 Kings vii. from the 23d verse. How wonderfully is the Word of God wrought! well might it be represented by a vision of four wheels! (Ezek. i.) The molten sea "stood upon twelve oxen, three looking toward the north, and three looking toward the west, and three looking toward the south, and

three looking toward the east, and all their hinder parts were inward." An ox was the standard of a tribe ; but here these *twelve* represented the order of the Christian priesthood, the twelve Apostles, just as the "twelve stars" upon the head of the woman, the Church (Rev. xii. 1), represented them.

As I have shown you before, the standard of the tribe of Judah was a lion ; of Ephraim, an ox ; of Reuben, a man ; and of Dan, an eagle. And thus it was that the forms of these four living creatures are seen upon the cherubim where God is enthroned, just as the cherubim were embroidered on the veil of the most Holy Place, where He sat upon the mercy-seat, still between the cherubim.

I think by looking for a moment at these symbolical animals upon the cherubim, we shall the better understand the meaning of the twelve oxen which supported the molten sea.

The sacred writings were laid up *in* the *Ark*, beneath the mercy-seat, in the most holy place, between the cherubim ; there God was enthroned,—there Moses and Aaron met Him to receive his Word ; there they consulted the Holy Oracle ; that was the divine council-chamber of the Church. "I will commune with thee from above the mercy-seat, from between the two cherubims which are upon the *Ark* of the *testimony*, of all things which I will give thee in commandment." (Exod. xxv. 22.) "Moses heard the voice of one speaking unto him from off the mercy-seat that was upon the *Ark* of *testimony*, from between the two cherubims : and he spake unto Him (Num. vii. 8, 9). "Thou that leadest Joseph like a flock ; thou

that dwellest between the cherubims, shine forth." (Psalm lxxxvi. 1.) There was this same sacred council-chamber in the Temple as in the Tabernacle. (1 Kings viii. 7; 2 Chron. v. 8; Heb. ix. 5; 2 Kings xix. 15, 16; Isa. xxxvii. 16, 17.)

And thus it was when the Tabernacle and Temple services were ruins, and God would speak further to his faithful few,—the true Church, that He instituted an order of *redeemed angels* (Rev. v. 8—10; Isa. vi. 2, 3) to announce his approach, and to be the representatives, both of the new order of priesthood,—the prophets; and in heaven, with the representative body of the Church there, the representatives of the Inspired Penmen to the end of time (Rev. iv. 4—8), and hence the emphatic expression, "He rode upon a cherub, and did fly." (2 Sam. xxii. 11.) Here we quite understand why, when God instituted the representative order, He should give to it the emblematical forms of the standards of his chosen people,—a lion, an ox, a man, and an eagle, to signify that He was still the leader of the battalions of the true Israel, "O *shepherd* of Israel, thou that *leadest Joseph like a flock*, thou that dwellest between the cherubims, shine forth." (Psalm lxxx. 1.) The word cherub signifies, "fulness of knowledge;" as we see God sitting in the Seraphims of Isaiah,—for they are the cherubim. (vi. 2.) As we see Him in the cherubim of Ezekiel, first and tenth chapters, and in the four beasts of the Revelation, fourth and fifth chapters, do we not feel that in Him, through the human instruments, is "fulness of knowledge?" "The Lord reigneth; let the people tremble: He

sitteth between the cherubims; let the earth be moved.” (Psalm xcix. 1.) Read the whole of it, and you will see how He is always exalted therein, how we are to worship Him there, and how He will always execute righteousness and judgment from hence. Compare also 2 Samuel xxii. 9—11, 13, 14, with Ezekiel x. 2—4, and you will see how fire proceeding from the mouth of God, is the fire of his Word.

Revelation is our tangible hold of Christ, of heaven, of God; and thus it is that the living element of the Word is compared to bread and water,—“I am that bread of life.” (John vi. 48, 63.) “If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink, thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water.” (John iv. 10.) Christ is the *author* of revelation, and gives us both these; and if you would see Him dispensing them from his throne between the cherubim, where is fulness of knowledge, see Rev. vi. 6.

And as I have shown you before, the *twelve* loaves of shewbread (which means, bread of faces) set each *Sabbath* morning fresh upon the golden table in the most holy place, with the seven lamps and seven candlesticks, so lighted and set that their light might fall upon them, were symbols of the bread of life in Revelation, of the “fulness of knowledge,” there to be lighted up by the indwelling Spirit in the Church, and to be administered to the people by her; and thus it was our Saviour commended David, that when he was *an hungered* he ate the shewbread, which the Scribes and Pharisees said it

was only lawful for the priests to eat. (Luke vi. 4, 5.) And He immediately added, with his own deep, comprehensive understanding of the subject, "The Son of man is Lord also of the Sabbath day;" signifying the moral law is now brought under the spiritual jurisdiction of my kingdom, and the whole typical system merged in the ocean of gospel light and holiness, solved and explained thereby, as the parallel passage in St. Matthew explains: "In this place is one greater than the Sabbath. If ye had known what this meaneth, I will have mercy and not sacrifice, ye would not have condemned the guiltless. For the Son of man is Lord even of the Sabbath." (Luke xii. 5—8.)

Thus was the Sabbath at once divinely re-instituted by Christ for a sacred observance of it under the Christian dispensation; set apart by Him for the dispensing of the bread of life by his servants, and the receiving it by his people. His own elucidation of this doctrine of the Sabbath during his ministry is very remarkable:—"He was teaching in one of the synagogues on the Sabbath-day. And there was a woman which had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years. And Jesus said unto her, Woman, thou art loosed from thine infirmity. And the ruler of the synagogue answered with indignation, There are six days in which men ought to work: in them, therefore, come and be healed, and not on the Sabbath-day. The Lord then answered him, and said, *Hypocrite*, doth not each one of you on the Sabbath loose his ox or his ass from the stall, and lead him away to watering?

And ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan hath bound, lo, these eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the Sabbath-day?" (Luke xiii. 10—16.) "If a man on the Sabbath-day receive circumcision, that the law of Moses should not be broken; are ye angry at me, because I have made a man every whit whole on the Sabbath-day?" (John vii. 23.) "The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath." (Mark ii. 27.) "And when the Sabbath-day was come, He began to teach in the synagogue: and many hearing Him were astonished, saying, From whence hath this man these things? And what wisdom is this that is given unto Him?" (vi. 2.)

And again, the teaching upon the subject of the shewbread could only occur on the Sabbath. (Luke vi. 1.)

And so, again, that marvellous sermon recorded in the seventh of John, the subject of which was, "If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink,"—could only be preached on the day of the feast of tabernacles; which feast was a type of an increase of sanctuaries in the fulness of the Gentiles, from whence the bread and water of life might be administered to the multitudes.

And so, again, that still more abstruse sermon recorded in the sixth chapter; wherein is the miracle of feeding five thousand men with five loaves and two fishes; and the explanation of the miracle by the preacher, "I am that bread of life. Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. It is the spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I

“speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life.” I say, this sermon could only be preached on the day of the Feast of the Passover, when the Paschal lamb burnt by fire was eaten, typical of Christ our Passover sacrificed for us; and who is ever to be eaten in faith by us—“The words that I speak unto you, they are life.” Do we now understand the beautifully figurative language of St. John, when, speaking of the Church in the wilderness, he says, “Where she is nourished?” (Rev. xii. 14.) God is incarnate in Revelation, as He was in the cherubim. He both feeds, enlightens, and speaks to His people from hence.

I think, now that we understand the meaning of the animal forms upon the cherubim, that they were the standards of the tribes, we shall the better understand the meaning of the twelve oxen which supported “the molten sea.” The form on the royal standard of the tribe of Ephraim was chosen as the one peculiarly appropriate to set forth the nature of “the Spirit of truth,” the thing signified in the typical water they supported. The ox is one of the most domesticated of all animals; they were employed to break up the fallow ground, to prepare it to receive seed. And is not this the employment of the ministers of the Gospel? And hence the Apostle’s sound argument, “Thou shalt not muzzle the mouth of an ox that *treadeth* out the *corn*. Doth God take care for oxen? or saith he it altogether for our sakes? For our sakes, no doubt, this is written: that he that ploweth should plow in hope; and that he that thresheth in hope should be partaker of his hope. If we have *sown* unto you

spiritual things, is it a great thing if we shall reap your carnal things?" (1 Cor. ix. 7, 9—11.) "Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in word and doctrine. For the Scripture saith, Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn. The labourer is worthy of his reward." (1 Tim. v. 17—19; Deut. xxv. 4.)

"Let the dead bury their dead: but go thou and preach the kingdom of God. No man having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God." (Luke ix. 59—62.)

And God could lay no greater charge against the people of Israel and Judah than this:—"Shall horses run upon the rock? Will one *plow there* with oxen? for ye have turned judgment into gall, and the fruits of righteousness into hemlock." (Amos vi. 11, 12.) The good seed which had been sown, had fallen "upon a rock." (Luke viii. 6—13.)

But turn again, and look at "the molten sea" supported by twelve oxen, three looking towards each quarter of the globe; the Temple was a type of the Church in the fulness of the Gentiles, and they represented the Twelve Apostles, the representatives of the Christian priesthood, commissioned by Christ to bear the water of life, the cleansing water of life, the holy waters of Divine truth to the four quarters of the earth: "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye, *therefore*, and *teach* all nations, *baptizing* them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."

(Matt. xxviii. 18, 19.) "By one Spirit are we all baptized into one body; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit." (1 Cor. xii. 13.) "Go ye into all the world, and *preach* the Gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." (Mark xvi. 15.) I might go back to the symbolical water of the tabernacle, to the preaching of it by the prophets; * but suffice it here to say, that "the molten sea" was a symbol of "the Word of Life," of "the Spirit of Truth," in which all are to be baptized: the emblem must always remain, but the thing signified must be sought after.

" There is a fountain fill'd with blood,
Drawn from Emmanuel's veins."

Revelation is to us that tangible fountain; without it, we could know nothing of God in Christ. "Ye are clean through the Word." (John xv. 3.) "That He might sanctify and cleanse the Church with the washing of water by the Word." (Eph. v. 27.) "The Word was God." (John i. 1.) "The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth from all sin." (1 John i. 7.) "Except a man be *born* of *water*, and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." (John iii. 5.) "Of his own will begat He us with the Word of truth." (James i. 18.) "Being *born* again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the Word of God, which *liveth*, and abideth for ever." (1 Pet. i. 23—25.) "If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me." (John xiii.

* Levit. xiv. 49—52; Num. xix. 12, 13; Ezek. xxxvi. 25.

8—10.) See David's clear understanding of the subject. (Ps. li. 2—10.) So that, whether we consider the Word of God as bread, water, a cleansing fountain, or as the broad river of salvation itself, we see that to us it is "the Life of God," in whatever way we may come in contact with it.

But look again at the framework which supported the molten sea, called "four undersetters" (1 Kings vii. 30—34), and you will find the description to be precisely the same as given by Ezekiel, in his vision of "four wheels" (i. 15, 16, 18, 21); the complexity, perfect system, and revolving operation of the inspired writings is what is intended. "The spirit of the living creature was in the wheels." (i. 20.) So that the framework of Revelation may be represented to us by the emblem of "four wheels," "four chariots," "four carpenters," "four cherubim," "four seraphim," or by a molten sea, supported by twelve oxen, still, the liquid ocean, the essential nature of "the Spirit of truth," is what is thereby set forth to us, and we may all wash therein, and be clean.

This was the true meaning of our Saviour's baptism in the Jordan; for twenty years He had laved in that ocean, and then He could say, "I have given them thy word. Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth. And for their sakes I *sanctify myself*, that they also might be sanctified through the truth." (John xvii. 14—19; 2 Chron. iv. 6.) When the chief priests, scribes, and elders asked Christ, "By what authority doest thou these things?" (Luke xx. 2—8), He simply answered them, I will tell you, if you will tell me

the meaning of John's baptism; but they could not, thing signified was too deep for the natural man to discern. The keys of knowledge, of the kingdom of God, were taken away from them. "And Jesus said unto them, Neither tell I you by what authority I do these things." His authority was the authority of the Scriptures of Truth.* If Christ could not dispense with these, let us not be deluded to think we can; let us not think the world will be saved by a baptism from heaven without them; let us not burn our Bibles, thus abrogate Revelation, but ever remember the words of the greatest of all students of it, "Thus it becometh us to follow all righteousness."

The next thing which meets us in the ministry of Christ is his temptation. We have seen Him baptized in the Jordan, typical of "the Spirit of truth" with which He had been endued, into which He had been baptized. "Truth shall be thy shield and buckler." (Ps. xci. 4.) "I am the Truth." The next chapter in St. Matthew tells us of his temptation. But before entering upon the subject, I would say here, that as with Christ, so with his servants, God never calls any of them to a great mission, or labour of love in his Church, but He first tries them by fiery trial, to exhibit the foundation upon which they stand, and He will never give a great work to any but for the glory of his great name. The trial of Job's drew from him an expression, or rather a confession of his deep sense of sin, a loathing of himself for

* For an explanation of the metaphorical, figurative, and parabolic style of the Scriptures, see my chapter on the Parables.

and elicited also a faith, and clearness of knowledge worthy of a later age. (xix. 25; xl. 4; xlii. 5.) "Many shall be purified, and made white, and tried." (Dan. xii. 10.) And St. James says, "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love Him." (i. 12.) There is a crown of life with which the faithful are crowned even in this life, as really, if not as gloriously, as they ever will be.

Christ was tempted of the devil. His life was one fiery trial; but He was obedient unto death, even the death of the cross; and then He could say, "Buy of me gold *tried* in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed."

Of the personality of the devil there can be no more doubt than of the personality of God; the two spiritual natures are at open warfare, and human nature is the medium in which the conflict, the struggle of the spiritual powers is carried on. "The field is the world." (Matt. xiii. 38.) But for this holy war, material creation never would have had place. (Col. i. 16, 17, 20; Eph. i. 9, 10.) So that when St. Paul tells us, "Through faith the worlds were framed by the word of God" (Heb. xi. 3), it simply means, God resting in the knowledge of his own attributes, in the essential holiness of his own nature; and in the omnipotence of *that* nature, He created all things, for material creation to be the medium of this war between the two spiritual powers. *Truth* will ultimately always assert itself: and if we have

truth upon our side, we may as confidently commit our cause to God, as He, in the calm dignity and repose of his nature, committed his to the conquering champion, Truth. (Rev. xix. 11 ; vi. 2 ; John i. 14—17 ; xiv. 6 ; xvi. 13 ; xvii. 19 ; xviii. 37 ; 1 Sam. xvii. 45—47.) Only, I would say, let us see that we fight with that weapon only, not suffering a shadow of “the leaven of malice and wickedness” to come upon the field, or we shall fail. Let us keep our eye fixed stedfastly upon God in Christ ; upon God in his stupendous carrying on of this warfare, and let us imitate Him. “Be ye imitators of God, as dear children.”

But to return to the conflict of the two spiritual Powers. To see the first conception of it, we must go into the council-chamber, if I may use the expression, into the war-office of a past eternity. God is represented to us as “the Ancient of *days*, whose garment was as white as *snow*, and the hair of his head like the pure *wool*.” (Dan. vii. 9.) This is simply figurative language of the eternal nature of God, without beginning or end. God in Christ was the champion who went forth from the beginning, “conquering and to conquer,” “the Lamb *slain* from the *foundation* of the world.” (Rev. xiii. 8 ; vi. 2.) And thus it is in i. 13, 14, we find of Christ precisely the same description as that given of the Ancient of *days*. And thus it is that the Alpha and Omega is seen overreaching and overruling all space and all time. But the prophecy of God in Christ by David is most remarkable, “His seed also will I make to endure for ever, and his throne as the *days of heaven*.” (Ps. lxxxix. 29.) What are these days of

heaven? Not the twelve or the twenty-four hours of *earth's* days; but the long rolling ages, the ceaseless roll of unbeginning and unending time. "As the *days* of heaven." Read the whole of the Psalm; it is most beautiful. "If *his children* forsake my law, and walk not in my judgments; if they break my statutes, and keep not my commandments; then will I visit their transgression with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes. Nevertheless my lovingkindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail. My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips. Once have I sworn by my holiness that I will not lie unto David. His seed shall endure for ever, and his throne as the sun before me. It shall be established for ever as the moon, and a *faithful* witness in heaven. Selah." Here David and his children were types of Christ and of his people. "As many as received him, to them gave He power to become the *sons of God*." (John i. 12.) These sons of God, begotten through Christ, have not kept the law as given to them by Him, and hence the awful prophecy in the remainder of this Psalm. Compare it with Rev. viii. 10, 11; xvi. 4—7. God is not mocked; his holiness and justice were inflexible in exacting a sacrifice for sin; and they will be inflexible in exacting *holiness* from the redeemed. Oh, the *Selahs* of this Psalm! they are the royal signature of the Supreme Being.

But look again at another prophecy of God in Christ, Micah v. 2. The literal translation would be, "Beth-lehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of

Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from the *days* of eternity." I think these *days* of heaven, and *days* of eternity, set at rest for ever the question between Mosaic and geological record. "The beginning" (Gen. i. 1) may mean, when "the foundation of the world was laid" (Rev. xiii. 8), or the six *days*' work may mean long rolling ages, "days of heaven, days of eternity." The days in the book of Esther are the same as the days of 2 Pet. iii. 8, and thus it was He prefaced the certainty of his meaning with the remarkable injunction, "Beloved, be not ignorant of this *one* thing."

Knowing now, who the champion, Christ, was, "the mighty God, the everlasting Father" (Isa. ix. 6); "I and my Father are one;" let us glance for a moment at the enemy with whom He was, and is, at open warfare. I think if we would realize more clearly the truth, that the devil in ourselves is God's enemy, we should be more humble, more holy, and more resolutely expel him from our hearts, in whatever form he may dwell there.

The awful and instantaneous downfall, the palpable and universal death which his entrance into our world occasioned; a fall and death extending onward, and still onward, beyond the ken of finite mind, tell us how dire was the nature which then by subtilty and lies crept into our terrene sphere. "The serpent beguiled me," tells us of anterior existence; the evil did not originate in the mind and heart of Eve: it was instilled by the Evil One. While we thus believe in the pre-existence of the devil, it must be confessed that there is

an impenetrable veil cast over that pre-existence. God, in mercy to his creatures, has thought fit to reveal *very fully* the individual part they have to take in the conflict, and to have left partly concealed the dread enemy with whom He is waging eternal warfare till his very existence be blotted out. And yet there are some passages so startling that we seem taken back into scenes of warfare which fill a reflective mind with solemn thought. (Jude 6.) "That *old* serpent, called the devil, and Satan" (Rev. xii. 9), seems to place his co-eternity with that of "the Ancient of days." Be this as it may, we know that the evil which he has engendered is an evil and a bitter thing; that sin is indeed "a noisome and grievous sore."

How awfully and how gloriously do the two cardinal truths arch our world. "The wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. vi. 23.) Could I have this world as it is to all eternity, and be the sovereign of it, I would rather have "the gift of eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."

The subject of the doctrine of the devil has been so fully gone into in my chapter upon Original Sin, and in the book of Esther, in the early part of this work, that here I need only add, that he is a personality, and the great enemy of God upon the arena of time. See His personality spoken of under the metaphor of a mountain (Zech. iv. 7; Matt. xvii. 20; Isa. xl. 4; xlix. 11); just as the personality of Christ is spoken of under the same metaphor. (Dan. ii. 35, 45; Rev. viii. 8.)

We do not know whether the angels are redeemed beings;

they may be, as the fiat of redemption had gone forth at the dawn of creation. "*In the beginning* God created the heaven and the earth." (Gen. i. 1.) "In the *beginning* was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the *beginning* with God." (John i. 1—3 ; Eph. i. 10.) I love to think of the angels as redeemed beings ; to think of joining the family in heaven, all redeemed beings ; the missions of angels my mission, the ministry of angels my ministry. As I contemplate their ministry in the Old Testament, I am overawed at the grandeur and reality of the work of God in Christ (Gen. xiv. 18, 19 ; xxxii. 24, 25, 28), at what He has done by His Word and by type for the human family. (Gen. xxxv. 9, 13, 14 ; xviii. 2, 22, 33 ; Ex. xxiii. 20—23 ; Josh. v. 13—15.)

May I, dare I say, that the ministering angels in heaven are one with God in Christ ? that they are sent upon missions of love *in the name*, and with the authority of God ? that to be a redeemed being, to be clothed in His righteousness, holiness, light, and glory, and sent in His name, is to be "the angel of his Presence ?" (Dan. iii. 25 ; vi. 22.) It is very bold to say so, but it is scriptural. "That they may all be one ; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us." And the *glory*—the essential holiness—"which thou gavest me I have given them ; that they may be one, even as we are one : I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made *perfect* in one." (John xvii. 21—23.) Oh, tell me of sin, but with it tell me of what my Redeemer has

done for my soul ; that He has purchased for me an eternity of holiness and oneness with my God. Oh, tell me that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, and that my happy mission is to be His servant, to be sent forth in His name, and with His authority to minister to those who shall be heirs of salvation : the world wanes before this. "Even so, come, Lord Jesus."

There is no separation between earth and heaven but sin, the gulf ever fixed : Christ is the believer's pathway. "I am the way, the truth, and the *life*." The believer here is one in life with Him there. And hence His striking promise to His Apostles, "I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me ; that ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel." (Luke xxii. 29.) This is now fulfilled. When the soul quits its mortal tenement, it is one with Christ, one with the Apostles ; the Church militant and the Church triumphant are one ; she spiritually one with Christ, is now reigning upon the earth with Him ; sitting with Him at his table in his kingdom, on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel. "Thou hast made us unto our God kings and priests : and we shall reign on the earth." (Rev. v. 10 ; i. 6.) It is because the Church does not know the spirituality of her estate, that she has not recognised this her present privilege.

"I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom." (Matt. xxvi. 29.) The Divine Presence is as much with us

now at the Lord's table, as ever He was in the days of his flesh. Our mortal part dies, but life is life still,—we ourselves are one continuity: if in the flesh I do not see the fruit of my labour, what matter? I shall see it in spirit,—“They rest from their labours, and their works do follow them.”

But as we approach the Lord's table, to commune with Him there, let us always approach with fear, reading the handwriting upon the wall, “Ye are clean, but not all.” (John xiii. 10, 11.) If anything frightens me in the world, it is the thought of meeting Satan at the Lord's table. (Esth. v. 4, 8, 9, 11; Job i. 6; ii. 1.) The Divine Presence is there to give us the fruit of the true vine. Oh, let us beware, lest Satan come also among us!

We do not once read of Satan, in any bodily form, risen from the dead; but as we do of God, in bodily forms, it confirms what is written,—“The dead in Christ rise first.” This view of the high commissions of angels, seems to solve the difficulty which some feel about the angels as recorded in the Old Testament.

This glance at the unseen world,—at the world of spirits, —seen by faith, and felt by experience to be not only a continuity, but an ever-present reality, takes us back to the temptation of Christ, to his conflict with the arch-fiend of hell, —with the power he came to subjugate and to destroy. And I would say, let us read carefully, because I know that the world has not yet been convinced of sin, that the devil reigns in men's hearts in such a multitude of forms that he is not perceived, not recognised, not cast out, not destroyed!

The doctrine of the devil is now, at the close of the nineteenth century, as much a myth in our own Church as it is in the German school of theology ; to speak of him to her as a being capable of deadly assault, of sudden, black suggestion to the mind, is to be laughed to scorn by those who take up for themselves the first position in the ranks of Christ's ministers, the first places as learned masters in Israel. I say, with them, it is a teaching null and void,—a child's fable, a hypocritical pretension, depravity *outré* vile. How this can be, while the Church has had, for nearly nineteen hundred years, her prototype lying before her, to say nothing of other books, Job, and our Saviour's ministry, is to me a marvel ; her trifling and compromise must come to an end, her dreaming delusion must be dispelled. "Think not with thyself that thou shalt escape in the king's house, more than all the Jews. For if thou altogether holdest thy peace at this time, . . . thou and thy father's house shall be destroyed : and who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this ?" (Esther iv. 13, 14.) After this, is it possible that the Church can still admit the traitor, even to the Lord's table, with the Divine Presence ? Yes, it is possible,—“Let the king and Haman come this day unto the banquet that I have prepared for him.” (Esther v. 4, 8.) Oh, I say, she must wake up from the delusion, break the satanic spell, “whom Satan hath bound, lo ! these eighteen years,” now eighteen hundred years God will go to the root of the disease, till she exclaim,—“The adversary and the enemy is this wicked Haman.” (Ib. vii. 6.)

I think I shall show you from the temptation of our blessed Redeemer, that there is a warfare between "the spirit of truth" and the evil spirit; that truth and righteousness, in the most lofty acceptations of the term, are to prevail; so that God may be seen upon his high and glorious throne, before whom the devil, a liar and a murderer from the beginning, cannot stand. And I think I shall show you, too, that those who know nothing of this warfare between truth and him—who would sap its base,—between the devil and themselves,—may very much question whether they are intrusted with "the true riches," or whether they are ambassadors for God at all.

Let us, then, watch for a moment the champion Truth and the foul spirit of evil upon the field of conflict. Each of the three records by St. Matthew, St. Mark, and St. Luke, throw different and important light upon the conflict. The remarkable fact of it is, that both Christ and his antagonist were armed with "the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God;" in the hand of the One, of Him who was "the true,"—"the truth," it was victorious: while in the hand of the other, of him who, "from the beginning, abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him—he is a liar, and the father of it" (John viii. 44)—that weapon in his hand was defeat, condemnation, destruction, death!

St. Matthew says, "Jesus was led up of the Spirit into the wilderness, to be tempted of the devil. And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was afterward an

hungred." (Matt. iv.) St. Mark relates the baptism in the Jordan: "Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. And immediately the Spirit driveth him into the wilderness. And he was there in the wilderness forty days, tempted of Satan; and was with the wild beasts; and the angels ministered unto him." (i. 11—13.) St. Luke says, "Jesus being full of the Holy Ghost returned from Jordan, and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness, being *forty days tempted* of the devil. And in those days he did eat nothing: and when they were ended, he afterward hungered." (iv. 1, 2.) In all these there is perfect agreement, although the manner of narrating the facts differs. "The Spirit driveth Him," tells us of the violence and malignity of Satan in that temptation. "Was led by the Spirit into the wilderness," tells us of the power of God under which He rested. The different narratives compared, open to us the spiritual conflict; the conflicting elements which were raging around the champion then upon the field. He was with the wild beasts; and the angels ministered unto Him! What a scene of heaven and hell was this! The Son of God with angels and with the wild beasts!

As both St. Mark and St. Luke tell us, "He was forty days tempted of the devil," it is possible that St. Matthew mentions the forty days, and then narrates the temptation which occurred during that time. I think the forty days without eating were, perhaps, the natural habit of the unfallen state, for it is particularly noted, "He was afterward an hungred."

And the signification of fasting, as taught by Christ, was always humiliation, and prostration of spirit. (Matt. iv. 16—18.)

“And the devil said unto him, If thou be the Son of God, command this stone that it be made bread.” (Luke iv. 3.) In this, the request of the devil was that Christ would desecrate the Almighty power in Himself to satisfy the carnal appetite. He was the called One, the Sealed One of the Father to give life to the world,—to give the Bread of Life to the world: would He sell his birthright for the bread which perisheth, and become a profane person as Esau? Would He eat the cursed thing, and become a fallen being like Eve? (Deut. vii. 26; xiii. 17, 18.) This was the trial of “the second Adam,” by an intelligent, determinate exercise of the will He did not renounce, or forfeit his native, original purity. The deep of His soul was still; He had no carnal appetite to be tempted.

Scripture facts are allegory. (Gal. iv. 24.) There is in them a secondary, as well as a primary meaning: and in “this stone” there was meaning; and in this “bread,” doctrine. The devil saw before him the Godhead, or “the precious stone,” “the chief corner stone,” who had been prophesied of by all the prophets. (Gen. xlix. 24; Dan. ii. 34, 45; Zech. iii. 9.) He saw Him who, in the future, had been seen to be “the *tried* stone.” (Isa. xxviii. 16.) Would it surrender to the tempter, or would it stand its trial? Would its ethereal purity,—its heavenly clearness (Exod. xxiv. 10) be

lost in the ordeal? No. Even the carnal mind will surrender to God, but God could not surrender to any fallen appetite. "Jesus answered him, saying, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every *word of God*." What a glorious clash of biblical weapons, the strong against the weak. Read carefully the passage quoted,—“The Lord thy God fed thee with manna, which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know; that he might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord doth man *live*.” (Deut. viii. 3.) Do we know what it is *to live* by the word of God; by faith to rise above billow and billow, till we have grappled with the last enemy, death, and seen written over the submerging ocean, “But the gift of God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ his Son?”

I have shown you He studied that Word for twenty years, and then He could repeat the words of his great type, By the Word of the Lord doth man *live*. And again, “I have meat to eat that ye know not of.” This doctrine of life by the Word, of bread, of meat, of water, of milk, of honey, of wine, is a mighty one throughout Revelation; it is taught by every symbol which the Spirit could employ to meet the fallen capacity of man; to make known to him the spiritual sustenance; and thus it is we meet with the metaphors, Bread, Bread of Life, Unleavened Bread, Shewbread, Staff of Bread; and Christ taught the doctrine most lucidly, and elaborately (John vi.); and then wound up the subject in

words equivalent to those of Moses, "The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life."

But look again at the nature of this temptation. The devil saw in Christ, not only the spiritual Head of his people, but also the High Priest, the Head of the visible Church. (Heb. iii. 1; vii. 16.) And hence the two different records by the Spirit of God,—"If thou be the Son of God, command that the *stones* be made bread." (Matt. iv. 3.) These stones evidently referred to the Christian priesthood one with Him; the altar is most holy, and it may not be desecrated either to the profit or the glory of the flesh; "the tried stone" was the example for all his servants in all ages. See the most revolting record He left of lovers of filthy lucre. (Luke xvi. 21; Isa. li. 10, 11, 12.)

"Thou art Simon the son of Jona: thou shalt be called Cephas, which is, by interpretation, a stone." (John i. 42; Eph. ii. 20—22; 1 Kings vii. 10, 11.) The Church may no more desecrate her office; the spiritual to the carnal than the Head did. "Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for Him hath God the Father sealed." To them He gave "The Bread of Life," and dispense it freely as they would: "Lord, evermore give us this bread." (John vi. 27—34.) And see the Apostles dispensing it as they received it. (1 Pet. i. 23—25; ii. 2—4; 1 Epis. John i. 1—3, 7.) Here as it were—"The milk of the Word" flowed from the chief corner stone; honey and

oil out of the flinty rock which followed them: and that rock was Christ." And by those lively stones they were faithfully dispensed to the whole congregation of the people. "He that believeth on me, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water." But had "Jesus Christ himself, the chief corner stone," desecrated the holy office, the "Habitation of God through the Spirit" could not have risen. (Eph. ii. 20.)

But let us look at the second proposition of the devil.

"And the devil taking him up into an high mountain, showed unto him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. And the devil said unto him, All this power will I give thee, and the glory of them: for that is delivered unto me; and to whomsoever I will I give it. If thou, therefore, wilt worship me, all shall be thine. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Get thee behind me, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve." (Luke iv. 5—8.)

Here, again, we see a clash of biblical weapons. Scripture was the root of the devil's argument and effrontery, and Scripture was the weapon of rebuke. "After these things did King Ahasuerus promote Haman, and advanced him, and set his seat above all the princes that were with him. And *all* the king's servants that were in the king's gate, bowed and revered Haman; for the king had so commanded concerning him. But Mordecai bowed not, nor did him reverence." (Esth. iii. 1, 2.) This sovereign assignment of power, and of the glory of this world, to the devil; and this his supreme,

or seeming, satisfaction in his great possession as expressed to Christ: and this, the thralldom of the human family in the unholy vortex in Babylon (Rev. xviii.), as expressed by the mind of the Spirit—"All the king's servants bowed, and revered Haman," always strikes me as one of the most awful views of ourselves that we can possibly take:—"How art thou fallen;" and how we are to rise I do not know: we should feel quite inextricable if we had not hold upon the anchor. "But Mordecai bowed not, nor did him reverence." In "the king's servants" there is pride, envy, hatred, murder, love of filthy lucre, vain glory, ambition, selfishness, and every uncleanness, with greediness. "Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues." Oh that we could raise some fresh memorial in our world, and inscribe, gratefully and adoringly, upon its base, "But Mordecai bowed not!"

The present reign of the devil in our world staggers some; but let us know that he is absolutely under the control of the Supreme Being; power has only been given to him to exhibit universally his evil nature, to expose evil; his downfall is as certain as right is right, and wrong wrong: the one must always be the conqueror, the other the vanquished. Truth is invincible, and the God who was manifest in the flesh, holy, great, just, and loving, is to be manifested to all worlds: Truth and holiness the innate attributes of his being; the stability of his throne; the strength of his reign, will

eternally enthrone Him ; conquer and enchain the antagonistic spirit. (Rev. xix. 11—13, 16 ; xx. 1, 2.)

Oh how deeply and marvellously must the Word of God be constituted to carry on this warfare to its completion ; He is therein incarnate, and can in a moment present whatever phase of it He will to his people. "The Word was God." The devil is too crafty, subtle, and deep for us to fathom his depths and devices ; our only safety is in going into the Ark, Christ, and for God to shut us in. Nobody can fall whom God holds, and nobody can stand whom He does not hold. He often suffers his people to fall, to teach them that their safety is in Him alone, and then He overreaches that fall by the grace of the Gospel of Christ, that all may finally be gathered together in One, even in Him. And thus, not only the sin of our first parents, but even the murder of Christ by the Church will be overreached, and all sin be blotted out by Him.

But look again at the nature, strength, and depth of Christ's temptation. Two scenes lay before Him : *The sin of the world* ; the depth, extent, and foul nature of which could be known only to Him, the God of holiness. In this Divine knowledge lay the dregs of the Crucifixion vial : I say, He saw "*the Curse*," "the sin of the world," the penalty of the violated law, about to be laid upon himself ; death, the grave, and hell, all lay open to his view. On the other hand, "*in a moment of time*," lay stretched in imposing array before Him all the kingdoms of the world, the power, and gorgeous glory of them ; with the promise that all should be his if He would

worship the prince of the power of the air to whom they all belonged. Would "the Son of the *Highest*" barter his true and supreme dignity for these?—the glory of "the Holy One" for these? No. "Mordecai bowed not, nor did him reverence." I think there can be no doubt but that the devil had read this, and so he thought by the *suddenness* of the temptation, by power, and by the gorgeous splendour of the scene, to beguile, to strike the blow, to sap the Foundation of Redemption, which had resisted the paltry offer of satisfying the craving of hunger. It is thus, Satan always suits his temptation to his purpose, and to the peculiar circumstances by which the individual is surrounded; let it be very deeply impressed upon our minds, "*In a moment of time.*" To him who is led by Satan captive at his will, he does not come thus; but coolly presents all that is seductive and congenial to the carnal mind, and he is sure of his prey; but to the rightly instructed, to the fortified, and to the holy, he will attempt by *sudden* power what he cannot accomplish by ordinary means. David fell when thus assaulted; Satan stood up against Israel, and provoked David to number Israel. (1 Chron. xxi. 1.) And Peter, his mind was held by the devil, that he could not receive the warning of his Lord. And is not the mind's eye, the mind's eye of the world, always held by him, that they cannot receive the warnings of God in his Word? "In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should

shine unto them." Let us "think soberly," "walk circumspectly," by the *very letter*, and Spirit of the Word of God; look well to the warnings and beacons there, not trifle with them, because He will bring every one of them against us in condemnation. And let us look well to every thing that comes in haste, that is suggested in a moment; I say, pause, because Satan is wily, and in power terrible: "Watch and pray, lest ye enter into temptation." And let the beacon be erected in our minds,

"In a moment of time."

The literal translation is not, "Worship me," but, "Fall down before me;" and this, I think, proves that the refusal of Mordecai to bow down, or to reverence Haman, was the why and the wherefore of the force and suddenness of the assault.

The answer of Christ was remarkable. Then, nothing but the naked sword of the Decalogue could vanquish the open foe. The gods many, kingdoms, power, glory, seen even from an high mountain in a moment of time, could not tempt Him to bow, how much less to reverence. "It is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve." Perhaps of all the temptations of our world, the glory of it, offered upon the high mountain of human position, is the most irresistible. "*All the king's servants, that were in the king's gates, bowed, and revered Haman.*"

And do we not see it every day? There is no human law to condemn the guilty; and thus it is that the Divine law comes in, where human law takes no cognizance, and is

nugatory. Then let us erect afresh for ourselves upon that "high mountain" the beacon: "Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God." (Exod. xx. 5.) But when we have done all that we can ever do, let the truth be rooted deep in our hearts, engraven upon the arches of our sphere:—

"Mordecai bowed not."

Let us now look at the nature of the third temptation. "And he brought him to Jerusalem, and set him on a pinnacle of the temple, and said unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down from hence: for *it is written*, He shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee: and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone. And Jesus answering said unto him, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God." (Luke iv. 9—11.) This clash of biblical weapons, this conflict between "the Son of the *Highest*" and the devil; between truth and error, "the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God," strikes me as deep and mysterious. As I hear the devil thus quoting scripture, I think it well becomes us to "try the spirits whether they are of God. Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: and every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God." (1 John iv. 1, 2.) Here the devil was at fault, "*If* thou be the Son of God." Let us here make our humble confession, that Jesus Christ has come

in the flesh, that He is our Maker, our Redeemer, and our God, our hope, our present peace and joy, and our everlasting life. Read the beautiful chapter from which I have quoted, and try your spirits, lest the devil creep in unawares (Jude 4), as in the case of this sudden, bold, and powerful temptation of Christ, with the Bible in his hand, and thereby deceive and seduce many. Let there be none of these satanic ifs in our creed.

The words Satan quoted were from David, "He shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways. They shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone." (Ps. xci. 11, 12.) Read this striking Psalm, and picture the Evil One watching Christ as He read it in the "mountain apart," and in "the desert place apart," and as he watched Him girding Himself in the panoply of light and truth, he said, 'My plan must be deep laid, my scheme of assault intelligent, scriptural; my snare shall be more wily than heretofore, my arrow more swift, the terror by night more appalling, the pestilence from hell more hellish; I will pursue, I will overtake, I will consume with the breath of hell, as it were dipped in heaven.' Oh, I am sure that temptation was not the trifling thing which we gather from simply reading the Divine record.

And again, notice the nature of the proceeding: "set him on a pinnacle of the temple." That temple, with its sacred ark and gorgeous service, was a glorious type of the Church, in the fulness of the Gentiles, with Christ her Head, her

strength, her light, her life. "If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down from hence." To have done so would have been a denial of that Headship. But how could Christ have cast himself down? A bodily fall was not the whole of what was intended; in that the *angels* could have borne Him up. There was a greater fall than that, the devil anticipated, even the surrender of his spiritual Headship for a temporal one. Would "the Son of the Highest" slide into Rome? would He worship "the beast"? The descent was so easy, the temporal glory would have been so grand, so world-wide, so striking: but no; "When Jesus perceived that they would come to make Him a king, He departed again into a mountain Himself alone." "My kingdom is not of this world." The angels could not have borne Him up here. "Behold, my servant, whom *I* uphold." The God-man sustained Himself; and the devil was vanquished by the God.

It is very remarkable that the Evil One, throughout the whole of this temptation, should have addressed Christ in the second person singular,—"*thou*," and that Christ should have confirmed his Sonship, even to the changing of the word of the law, from "*ye*" (Deut. vi. 16) to "*thou*." This, "*thou*" referred to himself; the devil could not worship God, nor could his beloved Son tempt him. This affectionate politeness of the devil is really too provoking; it meets us in a thousand ways: beware of it! there is nothing we have more to fear; "*If thou*," beware of a hellish negative, and of a hellish affirmative,—I say again, beware!

"The devils believe, and tremble." They may say, "*If* thou be the Son of God ;" they may not confess the name of Jesus ; but this, "thou," betrayed the tremor of the cringing spirit, of the crouching foe : and hence the suddenness, power, and subtilty of the temptation, the perversion, use, and keen application of Scripture. "In a moment of time the spirit driveth him into the wilderness."

"And when the devil had ended all the temptation, he departed from him for a season." Let us not think, when one temptation is at an end, that we can live carelessly. No. The devil only departs for a season. To the end of our lives we must watch, to ward off his darts, and to escape his snares : to the end of our lives we shall have to wrestle against powers of darkness,—against spiritual wickedness in high places. St. Matthew tells us, "angels came and ministered unto him." And the remainder of the narrative as given by St. Luke, tells us how truly the Son of God was in the Spirit and kingdom of his Father, and how the God triumphed in Him. "Jesus returned *in the power of the Spirit* into Galilee. And as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and stood up for to read. And there was delivered unto him the book of the prophet Esaias. And when he had opened the book, he found the place where it was written, *The Spirit of the Lord is upon me*, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor ; he hath sent me to *heal the broken-hearted*, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them

that are bruised. And he closed the book, and he gave it again to the minister, and sat down. And the eyes of all them that were in the synagogue were fastened on him. And he began to say unto them, This day is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears. And all bare him witness, and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth." Reader, glance back at that glorious commission,—at the Son of God thus reading Himself in Isaiah. By God He was instructed, by God anointed, and by the power of the Spirit He preached. Who would not, like Him, resist the devil, to go forth from fiery trial and temptation, to fulfil a mission of love so divine and so holy? Let our Master's direct purpose and holy elevation be an example to us: when the devil would tempt us to be discontented with, and to surrender, our spiritual privilege for temporal glory, let it be our choice to hold sweet communion with our God, and to do his will; and to remember that the preferment of a seat "on the pinnacle of the temple" is in the gift of the devil. If we would wield the sword of the Spirit of Truth as Christ did, the spiritual would very soon preside over the temporal,—the kingdom of God would very soon be supreme over "all the kingdoms of the world." I cannot see how the world is to be saved till that kingdom is made supreme in it; not only in the hearts and minds of the few, or, indeed of men; but till, by public authority, by ecclesiastical government, it is rightly estimated and made to take that supreme position which it is ultimately to occupy. I repeat, till this be so, our puerile efforts will

be abortive. The pinnacle of the temple may be ours ; we may say, "The Temple of the Lord, the Temple of the Lord, the Temple of the Lord are these," but the glory thereof is not the glory of "the Son of the Highest." His handwriting upon the wall will be seen, his voice will be heard,—“Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God : thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.” Turn to Matthew vi. 9—13, and *read* afresh the “Lord’s Prayer :” it is glory.

The temptation of Christ established for ever a great truth,—that there is *no sin* in temptation ; the most holy of all God’s people may be tempted ; the sin is in yielding, which no holy, humble, well-instructed mind would ever do, “no ; not for an hour.” Let the members of Christ’s Body beware how they co-operate with the devil to ensnare each other, knowing that whatever they do to one member thereof they do to Him. All temptation resisted will only be an exhibition of the holiness, the glory of God upon the tempted, even as the temptation of Christ was a palpable and absolute demonstration of the glory of the Father. Death itself only shadows forth the holiness and glory of God. “Said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God ?” (John xi. 40.) Hell shadows forth the holiness of God, and will be the revelation of his glory,—“I am alive for evermore, and have the *keys* of hell and of death.” (Rev. i. 18.)

“The glory of God” will overreach all. “This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.” (1 John v. 4.)

CHAPTER III.

THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT; OR, THE DECALOGUE
IN THE HANDS OF CHRIST.

AFTER the fiery ordeal of the temptation in the wilderness, we find Christ "as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, and rejoicing as a strong man to run a race." And so, too, as we read the lives of all his most eminent servants, we find preparation for his service to have been by some trial, before they have been intrusted with any great commission important to his Church and for the welfare of his people. Thus we read, "God did tempt Abraham," that is, try him; and thus the prayer is emphatic, "Lead us not into temptation," that is, do not suffer us to be tried above what we are able to bear; "but deliver us from evil." Then I would say, not only to individuals, but to the Church herself at this critical juncture of time, "Blessed is the man who endureth temptation: for when he is tried he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him." There are stages in the divine life, and there is a crown of life in this life beyond the trial of temptation and obedience. And this is the attainment set forth by Christ in his sublime, stupendous Sermon on the Mount.

That sermon was preached before multitudes of people from Galilee, and from Decapolis, and from Jerusalem, and from Judea, and from beyond Jordan. It is the next thing which presents itself to us in his ministry; and it is not only a marvel of wisdom, as it was confessed to be by those who heard it, but it takes in the whole system of ethics,—it is, as it were, a flood of *glory* let in upon our world,—the very holiness of his gospel; that which had been foreshadowed by the law, by the Mosaic law, by the ceremonial law, and by the prophets; here a transition period, even for the law, is clearly marked; it appears to us, under a new economy, even in the omnipotent power and life of the divine Lawgiver. It was brought into the spiritual dispensation, which John represented. Christ was Himself a transcript of the holiness of his Father (Rom. vi. 4), and therefore his law must be also a transcript of that holiness which is his glory; a seed of his *holy* nature which is his self-existent and eternal life. (1 Cor. xv. 38.)

Perhaps nothing more commends the ministry of Christ to our understandings and to our hearts, than the Decalogue, standing, as it does, at its head; being made its base, and, as it were, its life-blood throughout every ramification of it. He knew the Eternal Spirit to be the light and life of the law,—the light and life of the Church, therefore He employed figurative language, borrowed from the lamps of the tabernacle and of the temple, and said, in the commencement of this sermon, “Ye are the light of the world;” that is, “the

Spirit of *holiness*” in you will be the light of the world (Rom. i. 4); or, as St. Peter rendered the passage, “If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye: for the Spirit of *glory* and of *God* resteth upon you.” (1 Peter iv. 14.) And so the Divine Preacher went on to say, “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your *good works*, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.” And then, in justification of this doctrine of light from the Spirit of holiness and of glory, He added, “Think not that I am come to destroy the Law, or the Prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till *all be fulfilled*. Whosoever, therefore, shall break *one* of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called *great* in the kingdom of heaven.” (Matt. v. 14—19.)

Christ did not here only speak of the law as to be fulfilled by Himself for our justification, but also of that law of life which is to proceed from Himself till the law of sin be destroyed, and a restored world fulfil the law themselves (Rom. viii. 2, 3), “That the righteousness of the law might be *fulfilled in us*, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.” (Ib. 4; Rev. xiv. 4, 5.) This does not at all shake the doctrine of justification by faith in Christ; for when, in that distant period, men shall themselves obey,—be without fault before

the throne of God,—they will give to Him the glory of their sinless state, of their justification, as the Restorer of the Spirit to their hearts to enable them to obey; as the giver of grace and of life, to have led the Church onward and upward to that glorious consummation.

But this doctrine of restoring life and of perfection, does shake that foolish belief which is so rife in the present day, that God will in a moment rain down glory from heaven, and bring in the Millennium, altogether independent of the law of progress by the power of “the Spirit of truth.” There is nothing like this in individual experience. Even a St. Paul could say, “O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?” And are we not ourselves changed from glory to glory by this same urgent depth of appeal to “the Spirit of holiness” and of glory? Then let us turn to the Decalogue in the hands of Him who was Himself “the law of the Spirit of life,” and believing in Him, we shall see and feel how it may be fulfilled, and not made null and void, even by sovereign grace itself.

“He opened his mouth, and taught them, saying, Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted. Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled. Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God. Blessed are the peacemakers: for they

shall be called the children of God. Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake : for theirs *is* the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad : for great is your reward in heaven."

To understand this Sermon on the Mount, we must first understand the precise nature of these benedictions. Nine present beatitudes, with seven promises added ; and two present, still more abounding, beatitudes. (v. 3—10.) Christ was then speaking to his disciples, "When he was set, his *disciples* came unto him." (v. i.) These dispositions of mind and spirit explain to us these superlatives of the Decalogue in the hand of Christ, the source to be cleansed, sanctified from whence they were to issue.

"*For I say unto you*, that except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven." "Either make the tree good, and his fruit good ; or else make the tree corrupt, and his fruit corrupt."

The precise meaning of these *Blesseds*, is, not under the condemnation of the law, not cursed, made free. "He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, *hath* everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation ; but *is* passed from death unto life." (John v. 24.) The disciples had passed from death unto life, they were "*blessed*," "born of God ;" and upon that new creation was to be reared

this structure of works preached by Christ. But before proceeding, glance for a moment at the two states, blessed and not blessed; cursed and not cursed. (Deut. xxvii. from the 15th verse; xxviii. 3—5, 16—19; Matt. xxiii. 13—16, 27—29; xxv. 39; Luke vi. 24—26; Gal. iii. 10—13.) These benedictions are *spiritual* bestowments, beatitudes of our own bosom. I do not know that Christ ever promised to his disciples temporal dignities, or even blessings. "In the world ye shall have tribulation, but *in me* ye shall have peace. Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world." And yet in these beatitudes, so authoritatively pronounced by God in Christ, there is a reality, an experimental glory, which the possessor would not exchange for any earthly distinction whatever; moral grandeur is contained therein. "Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs *is* the kingdom of heaven." Here is implied penitence, humility, renunciation of self, and strong trust in God. This is not the crouching of the cowardly; it is not a confidence that denies sin, nor a false shame that would cloak it; it is a sublime sense of forgiveness, of peace with God, repose in Him. "Theirs *is* the kingdom of heaven."

"Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God." I conceive it possible for a person to be surrounded by adverse circumstances, exposed in childhood, entangled in the snares of the wicked one, and yet whose heart may not be corrupt. "God looketh at the heart." "The backslider in heart shall not see God." But, "Blessed are the pure in

heart : for they shall see God.” That is, shall so see Him in his Word, in his holiness, in his glory ; see Him as He is revealed to us in his Son ; that we shall by his Spirit be changed into his image from glory to glory. It is impossible for the impure in heart to see God ; but He knows the pure, and He will reveal Himself to them, a God mighty to save. Oh, how do we rejoice in a moral Governor of the universe who knows the heart, and will not suffer a legal, immoral human government to prevail against it. Here God does not revoke his promise, but the fulness of the Gospel enters : “They shall see God.”

“Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness’ sake : for theirs *is* the kingdom of heaven.” It is this present beatitude I would have you notice. Even in persecution, in long endurance, suffering wrongfully, we may still be in the kingdom of God ; still have the kingdom of God within us. To see God, and to live in his presence, is to dwell in his kingdom. Oh ! when will this kingdom, in the hearts of men, be recognised, estimated rightly ? Till it is, how can it reign supremely throughout the world ? how can the kingdom of the prince of darkness fall before it ?

These persons thus blessed are the only persons who can rise to the altitude, to the Divine standard reared in this sermon on the holy mount ; they must be spiritual, “born again of water and of the Spirit.” The Bible is our tangible water, our tangible bread, our tangible life. When we are born, sustained, quickened by these, and baptized with the Holy

st, we may attain to the goal, but we never can without
1.

We must learn to distinguish distinctly between spiritual
ing and the mere blessing of the animal kingdom.
mon has curiously connected the blessing of God resting
the natural man with that which rests upon the beasts :
said in mine heart concerning the estate of the *sons of*
that God might *manifest them*, and that they might see
they themselves are beasts. For that which befalleth
sons of men befalleth beasts ; even one thing befalleth
a : as the one dieth, so dieth the other ; yea, they have
one breath ; so that a man hath no pre-eminence above a
st : for all is vanity. All go unto one place ; all are of
dust, and all turn to dust again. Who knoweth the
rit of man that goeth upward, and the spirit of the beast
at goeth downward to the earth ? ” (Eccles. iii. 18—21.)
his is a very marked distinction between the sons of God
and the sons of men ; the one are endued with the blessing
of life, and of eternal life ; the other with only the blessing of
the animal creation. Ishmael and Esau are the most striking
recorded examples of these last ; they stand before us the very
types of “ the sons of men,” so decisively described by Solo-
mon. (Gen. xvii. 20—36.) “ By faith Isaac blessed Jacob
and Esau ; but Esau was never an heir with him of the same
promise. And so God might bless Ishmael with all temporal
blessing ; but He has never yet made his race free from the
curse of the law and of sin ; nor bestowed upon them the

blessing of the everlasting covenant. "He maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust." Oh, thou natural man! crowned with temporal blessing, hast thou any "pre-eminence above the beast?"

"The law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus" can so operate upon the heart as that men shall obey. "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah. I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people." (Jer. xxxi. 31—33.)

"Then will I sprinkle *clean water* upon you, and ye shall be clean. And I will put my Spirit within you, and *cause* you to walk in *my statutes*." (Ezek. xxxvi. 25—27.) This simply means that a new nature, the nature of God, will bring forth holy action, and holy fruit. (1 Cor. xvi. 19, 20; 2 Pet. i. 3—11; 1 John iv. 15—17.) The law of obedience, true benevolence, and love, will be wrought in the man in whom God dwells, who has been sprinkled with the clean water of the Word of God: "Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high

calling of God in Christ Jesus." (Phil. iii. 12, 13.) It is true, there are degrees of attainment in the Divine life ; it is a long time before we attain to "the beauty of holiness ;" but, oh, it is a pitiable sight, to see a low attainment in holiness ; to see the sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty despising his holy laws. St. Paul felt this : "God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness. He therefore that despiseth, despiseth not man, but God, who hath also given unto us his Holy Spirit," meaning thereby, to be holy. "As touching brotherly love, ye need not that I write unto you : for ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another." (1 Thess. iv. 1, 7—9.) We see daily, even in the awakened, enlightened conscience, hatred, revenge, and malice conflicting with the light and power of the Spirit ; but it is a deplorable sight ; such an one should study more *deeply* the Divine law, the foreshadow and the substance of the holiness of the Gospel ; he should supplicate more for right views of *Christ*, and of the extent and *nature* of his Gospel ; he should partake more largely of the bread and water of life ; he should pray for more light, for more of the baptism of the Holy Ghost, for more deadness to the world, for more of the putting down of the flesh, for the *crucifixion* of self ; and he should resolutely master his purpose, and then he would see whether the precepts, promises, and faithfulness of God are at fault, or himself. "Sanctify them through thy truth : thy word is truth." The truly sanctified conscience will be sensitively, painfully alive to every approach of disobedience,

to every appearance of evil. Hatred, envy, jealousy, malice, are all subdued to love; the *flesh is* subdued to the Spirit. Such an one would not injure his neighbour; the leaven of malice and wickedness is gone. He may be persecuted for righteousness' sake, reviled, and all manner of evil said of him; but the kingdom of God, the nine beatitudes of that kingdom dwell in him, and, instead of seeking revenge, he will come to this standard of his Master, and seeing God revealed in him, he will copy that transcript of the eternal throne, and pray, "Let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us." The Epistle which our Church has appointed for the first Sunday in Lent is a beautiful illustration of this. (2 Cor. vi. first ten verses.)

In the Sermon on the Mount there is a calm, holy, sublime surrender of the carnal mind to the spiritual, of the flesh to the Spirit; we feel that "the law is spiritual." The letter of it remains as inflexible and as obligatory as when written by the finger of God upon Sinai; but there is a leading onward and upward; the Eternal Spirit, which was purchased back to the world by the obedience and death of Christ, is brought home to the heart of man in vitality and power to enable him to fulfil it. And thus it was, that in his ministry He ever set a spiritual morality, the high instincts of a spiritual nature, before the severe rigour of the letter of the law; or rather, I should say, He overreached, overarched the broken commandment by the grace and mercy of his Gospel, and of his kingdom. (Luke xiii. 15,

16; vi. 2—4.) As it were, the life of them superseded life by the righteousness of the law; and the animating principle revivifies the affections to spontaneous obedience, so that the fulfilling of the law is the attainment of the spiritual man. It is now this heaven-born instinct we are to listen to till "they shall no more teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, "Know the Lord: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord."

And so throughout the Sermon on the Mount, a superlative, or the holiness of the Gospel, was built upon the Sinaitic letter, the Teacher come from God took the letter of the law from the hands of the rabbis, and brought it under the jurisprudence of his own kingdom. He reared a spiritual law upon every broken fragment. See this triumph of the spiritual over the natural man: "Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery: *But I say unto you.*" And again: "It hath been said, Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement. *But I say unto you.*"

"Again, ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old time, Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths: *But I say unto you,* Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth: *But I say unto you, Resist not evil.* Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. *But I say unto you, Love your*

enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you: That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven. Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." This conquest over self, over sin, over that law of evil in our natures, which is warring against the law of God, can only be gained by faith, by a consciousness of the reality, and of the glory of the kingdom of Christ above temporal glory: when we *see God*, we shall worship Him by affection, and by service akin to his nature. Then the things of time and sense will so cease to occupy us, that they will not vex us. Do we understand now what the Prophet Isaiah meant when he said, "He shall magnify the law, and make it honourable?" (xlii. 21.)

"A law shall proceed from me." This spiritual law is to be universally established, and then earth will have attained to this altitude reared upon the holy Mount, to this standard of heaven,—"*Perfect, as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.*" Did we ever consider this Divine "*Ensign,*" glory? He will lift up an ensign to the nations *from far*. (Isa. v. 26; xi. 10.)

And so throughout the 6th chapter there are the same superlatives, the same moral zeal, the same impressive setting forth of that which it is our wisdom to observe and to do. "*But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth. But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy*

her which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly.

“But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thine head, and wash thy face; that thou appear not unto men to fast, but unto thy Father which is in secret.

“Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt; and where thieves cannot break through and steal: For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.” What would be the state of mind and disposition so acting? Would it not be the law of the carnal mind subjected to the law of Christ? Would it not be the flesh subdued to the Spirit? But is even the church as a body so acting? As we look round upon those thin her pale, do we not see the covetous, avaricious, selfish man greedily grasping all that comes within his grasp? Oh, do we not feel the wisdom of the Divine injunction, *“Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt?”* Did you ever see a house broken up? Valuable treasure, the choice, much-prized collection of ages scattered to the four winds of heaven; or only fallen into alike rapacious hands to be enjoyed for a moment, and then to be scattered in fragments till consumed by the moth and rust of time? Did you ever see the carnal mind loosening from its anchor, earth? the trembling, wrecked, disappointed, overwhelmed spirit loosening from its all, earth? hopes snapped, the

affections severed, and no heavenly object upon which to rest, no heaven to soar to, no bosom in which to be again embosomed, in which to find rest? I say, did you ever see these, and not consider this our Saviour's striking language concerning the transitory, corruptible nature of all human treasure? I have seen them, and reflected very solemnly upon the wisdom and aptitude of this Sermon on the Mount to the frail children of men: and I have thought if that Divine Preacher failed in stemming the torrent of human vanity, in undeceiving the human mind in the mad pursuit of pleasure, riches, and temporal glory, how is it to be done? How can the children of men be taught to lay up for themselves treasure in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through and steal?

“Death, 'tis a melancholy day,
To those who have no God,
When the poor soul is forced away,
To seek its last abode.”

But, oh! how beautiful is the sight; how great the privilege to see an instructed mind, a purified spirit, a sanctified and believing soul wing their way to the courts of bliss into the *hands* of our Father (Luke xxiii. 46)—that is, into His jurisdiction: mercy, love. This is not poetry, an ideal, a vacuity; it is a translation which is accomplished here (Col. i. 13); it is a beatitude, holiness perfected, consequent rest, glory there.

The Preacher then further illustrated His subject of care-

fulness about earthly things by still more vivid metaphor; His deep, Divine knowledge grasped it in its right, true, solemn light; in its momentous importance, and He faithfully set it forth as it is.

"Take *no thought* for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not *the life* more than meat, and the body than raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: and yet I say unto you, That even Solomon, in all his glory, was not arrayed like one of these. Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith? Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, wherewithal shall we be clothed? (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. *But seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.* Take, therefore, no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof." It is a question with many, how far this teaching may be taken in its literal, absolute sense. Our Saviour did not theorise, speculate, or exaggerate; what He said, He meant. The necessities of our fallen nature must be listened to, and dealt with as fallen; but "We groan within ourselves, waiting for the redemption of our body." There is to be a

“restitution of all things,” that Babylon of *ourselves*, the downfall of which is so graphically, so stupendously related in Rev. xviii., must be brought about, the time must come. Are there not now, those who are made slaves to the pampering of the flesh; souls of men sacrificed to the luxuries of life, in our factories, in the toil of commerce and of business? Our earth has, and will again undergo great convulsion and changes; God could in a moment so change her nature and constitution, as that she should yield again primeval and spontaneous growth. *The curse*, because this was a *curse*, “In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread:” this Preacher of righteousness took away even *this* curse, and thus it was that His preaching was upward, onward, leading on to the consummation of what was to be brought about by His work. I know the teaching of the carpenter’s son was despised; nor is it now ~~for~~ a commoner to rise up and change our constitution and institutions; but I think if those who occupy the high places of the earth, if the noble were to “seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness,” so that they became fashionable pursuits, well known in the higher circles; this scriptural progression and restitution would be brought about, and the end attained: “All these things *shall be* added unto you.” “God is not a man that he should lie.” Oh, let them listen to this superlative of His sermon, “*But seek ye* first the kingdom of God and his righteousness.” Then very soon the present day glory of Solomon would be superseded by the glory of “the lilies of the field.”

"Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir-tree, and instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle tree." "O that thou hadst hearkened to my commandments! then had thy peace been as a river, and thy righteousness as the waves of the sea." (Isa. xlviii. 18.) In the 60th and 65th chapters of Isaiah, we see this restitution of all things; and again, "I will create a new heaven and a new earth" (Rev. xxi. 1); so that the latitude and the magnitude of the Preacher's promise, *All these things shall be added unto you*," were no wild chimera, but that which God is as able to perform in a moment, if His people would *obey*, believe, and receive the blessing, as He is in the lapse of ages.

"God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham:" and how complete would be the recovery, that these should not only be clothed in the gifts and graces of the Spirit, but also in the clothing of primeval innocence, of stature in her simple dress! "If God so clothe the grass of the field, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?" The clothing of the grass and of the lilies, is to be again that of man; not by toil, or by the loom, but by seeking first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness. We may be in the world, but instead of being of it, we may be helping forward this recovery; helping to raise earth to heaven, helping to unite the two.

And thus it is, that in this sermon on the Mount, is plainly set forth what the motive of action should be; and so, how the life might be perverted by base objects of pur-

suit. Read carefully, because the teaching is fraught with a deep knowledge of the thoughts and intents of the hearts of men : " If thine eye be *single*, thy whole body shall be full of light. But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If, therefore, the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness ! " (Matt. vi. 22.) Let us look well to our motives, to see if our eye be single, for the greatest curse, the greatest judgment that can fall upon us in this life is, that spiritual darkness should close upon the light of natural life : " Give glory to the Lord your God, before he cause darkness, and before your feet stumble upon the dark mountains, and, while ye look for light, he turn it into the shadow of death, and make it gross darkness." This was written of the Jewish Church ; and her sister kingdom not only saw the darkness close upon her, but had left the stringent record for herself to read.

The whole tenour of this sermon on the Mount is calm, holy, lofty, and unearthly ; that as we read, we feel borne aloft from the turmoil and strife of time to a bright haven of rest and peace ; we seem to rest beneath its nine beatitudes ; beneath the spiritual canopy of grace, so that, although the storm be loud without, and the tempest rage around, still we have calm within ; conscious that " the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death." And this is a blessed consciousness, this is to be "*Blessed*," to feel that by grace, by Divine and experimental teaching ; by the gift of the Spirit ; we have attained

to the spiritual law of love, forgiveness, good for evil, blessing for cursing; yes, I say, this is not only a spiritual law built upon the broken fragments of the letter, but it is a heaven built upon earth. Oh then, let us be more humble, less self-seeking; let us consecrate ourselves more and more *to obey*; more and more to rise to the requirement of the Divine law; of "the Lord our lawgiver: the Lord, he is our King; he will save us."

In the seventh chapter, there is the same teaching, that the law of a sanctified conscience is to guide us in our judgment, the law of perfect charity in our actions; there is the same command to obey that holiness of the Gospel which was foreshadowed by the ceremonial law, "Ye shall be holy; for I the Lord your God am holy." (Levit. xix. 2.)

"Judge not, that ye be not judged. For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again." The standard, or the morality of the Gospel does not admit that brother should rise up against brother in judgment; the thought would be terrible to a sanctified conscience. "Whosoever is angry with his brother *without* a cause, shall be in danger of the judgment:" aggressive warfare is repugnant to the believer; but there is defensive warfare which may be, too, alike repugnant, but necessary; and to defend Christian character, to be careful that the name of Christ be not dishonoured, it may be necessary to rise in judgment; to show transgressors of the Divine law, wherein they are lacking in

its requirement: this is the fulfilment of the law, and not the transgression of it, "With what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again."

"Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: for every one that asketh, receiveth; and he that seeketh, findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened." God is always the same, —faithful, unchangeable; and yet we may sometimes pray, without such an answer as we have desired. Still God is the same. One prayer never has, nor ever can fall to the ground unanswered. He may be crowning our petition with spiritual blessing, and we may be despising it, because we do not recognise aright the superiority; or our prayer may receive its answer when we are in the grave. But there never has been, nor ever can be, a prayer offered up according to the will of God, and not receive an answer: "If ye, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give *good things* to them that ask him." But then comes the winding up of the subject,—may I say, the wherefore of the Divine answer,—gift? No. But I may say, one grand, standing condition of it,—"*therefore*" (if this be not a superlative, it is an adverb), "*Therefore* all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for *this is the law and the prophets.*" Let us be careful to fulfil this part, this condition in the covenant of promise, and God will assuredly fulfil His promise.

The context of this verse, or, rather, of this morality of the Gospel, is remarkable, "Enter ye in at the strait gate;" or, as though the Preacher had said, "Enter ye in at *this* strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: because strait is the gate, and broad is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it." Thus we see it is not enough to avoid murder, stealing, and uncleanness. The gate is wider than this,—the way broader than this, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat. But how few find the narrow way of these superlatives which lead unto life! Do not think here, I am undermining the doctrine of Christ. No. These are the fruits of that foundation, and they are inseparable: "*Think not* that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I *am not* come to destroy, but to fulfil."

The gate of heaven has never been made wider, nor the way broader, since the Great Preacher proclaimed them strait and narrow. He Himself drew the route, and from it He never swerved. But there are many who not only ignore and turn away altogether from this superlative track, but they enter the broad paths of hatred, revenge, slander, pleasure, vanity, and unworthy pursuits, till they are led to destruction. Oh, let us fear very greatly to give latitude to the strait gate and the narrow way! The soul and spirit may wander, till return to God be impossible: "The backslider in *heart* shall be filled with his own ways." The

departure from God is often so unintentional, and the heart is so imperceptibly drawn away by meaner affections, by the farm and the merchandise, pride, and self-seeking, that I would say, watch and correct the first rising of departure,—

“Guard my first spring of thought and will,
And with T hyself my spirit fill.”

The winding up of this sermon upon the system of ethics is remarkable. The prophet must be tested by the structure he rears,—the sheep, not by its clothing, but by its inner nature. “*Beware of false prophets. Ye shall know them by their fruits.*”

“Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that *doeth the will* of my Father which is in heaven.” This assertion of our Lord’s almost frightens us, as we read it at the foot of this standard of the Gospel: “he that *doeth.*” Oh, who can attain to this declaration of our Father’s will, to the high attainment of His throne? And still the command is as absolute, and as sovereign as that Throne can decree: “Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.” (vi. 10.) “Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.” (v. 48.) Oh, I say, this Ensign of the Lion of the tribe of Judah is not nonsense. Oh, that He would give us more boldness, courage, strength, and humility to follow where He leads!

Then, leaving this standard erect before His disciples and

the multitude, the mind of the Preacher passed on to the final judgment, when the hearts of all will be tested by it, "Many will say unto me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that *work iniquity*." Oh, let us try ourselves again by this touchstone, the standard of heaven! But rejoice as we do so, that we can read an appendix to this our sentence of death: "The wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." (Rom. vi. 23.) But still, I will maintain that this does not give one iota of latitude to this standard reared upon the Holy Mount: "The letter killeth; but the Spirit giveth life;" that is, the Spirit was given for us to fulfil the law.

The Preacher's last illustration in that sermon confirms this.

"*Therefore*" (not a superlative, but again an adverb), "*therefore* whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and *doeth* them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a *rock*,"—the *Rock*, Christ,—“And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock.” But it may be asked here, will God suffer the rain to descend, the floods to come, and the winds to blow upon a soul built upon Christ, and doing the will of His Father which is in heaven? Yes, He will suffer it; and it is the greatest

honour He can put upon the creature: "Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid." (v. 14.) Christ Himself learned obedience by the things which He suffered (Heb. v. 8); and we are to learn obedience by the things which we suffer: if we do so, gifts, new discoveries in the kingdom of grace, will crown our obedience; life will crown our affliction: "the still, small voice" will pass by after the rain, the flood, and the wind. "Every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth *more* fruit."

"And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and *doeth* them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand: and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it." If we regard this Divine beacon with regard to an individual, is it not a terrible denunciation of judgment for disobedience, for sin? But if we regard it as relating to a body, to the Church, brought into judgment before God for declension, for presumption, for trifling with the naked letter of His Word, is it not still more terrible? The antediluvian Church fell. "My spirit shall not always strive with man." The Jewish Church fell: "Behold, your house is left unto you desolate." And I have shown you from the Apocalypse, that the English Church will fall, because this spiritual law of the Decalogue is not her rule of life,—because the Divine rubric is not her guide. This superlative is the fruit of "the tree of life;"

and it cannot grow but upon a branch of "the true vine." "Blessed are the pure in *heart* : for they shall see God,"—arrive at the highest beatitude of earth. We see plainly from the miserable obscurity of some, that they cannot see God,—judicial blindness has overtaken them, "They weary themselves to find the door." The Church has grieved the Eternal Spirit by her unbelief, trifling, and sin : "There fell a *great star* from heaven." (Rev. viii. 10.) "These things saith he who holdeth the *seven* stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks." (Ib. ii. 1.) That house fell : and great was the fall of it.

"And it came to pass, when Jesus had ended these sayings, the people were astonished at his doctrine : for he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes." Such was, and ever will be the force of moral power ; it is authority, not the bare letter of the scribe, but authority. "The Son of man," the distinct human nature, took this Divine authority from the Sacred Writings. He there saw Himself to be the magnifier of the law,—He from whom was to proceed a spiritual law, the author of that life and power by which alone men can obey. "Tell us, by what authority doest thou these things ?" But because the priests, scribes, elders, and doctors of the law could not tell Him the meaning of John's baptism ; which, as I have shown you, symbolized "the molten sea" of "the Spirit of truth ;" "Sanctify them through thy truth : thy Word is truth," He said unto them, "Neither tell I you by what authority I do these things."

(Luke xx. 2—8.) If we would teach with authority, we must ourselves be clean through the Word which He has spoken unto us (John xv. 3); and the "Spirit of Truth" must be the authority of our teaching. Here we must take our stand, here we must live, and here we must die. We may be browbeaten, persecuted, and often miserably cast down; but Truth can never fall, because the Truth is God, and God is "the True." "The Church is subject unto Christ;" and He will "sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water *by the Word*." (Eph. v. 23—26.)

Again, let us look at the Decalogue, not only as the foundation of our Saviour's Sermon on the Mount, but as the foundation of His ministry; and this superlative of it as the standard of His life, and as the standard He reared for the Church in all ages: for as we cannot be saved without faith, neither can we without works,—without such moral renovation of soul and spirit as shall enable us to receive the promises, both for faith and works. "Jesus said, My *doctrine* is not mine, but his that sent me. If any man will *do his will*, he shall know of the *doctrine*, whether it be of God." (John vii. 16, 17.)

And when He would instruct the young man how he might attain eternal life, He said, "If thou wilt enter into life, *keep the commandments*. He saith unto him, Which? Jesus said, Thou shalt do no murder, thou shalt not commit adultery, thou shalt not steal, thou shalt not bear false witness, honour thy father and thy mother; and thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

The young man saith unto him, All these things have I kept from my youth up." What a bold declaration to make to God! One would have thought it would in some way have been modified; and his prompt question was not less confident, less presumptuous, "What lack I yet?" Then came the trial by the superlative of the law of the Gospel: "*If thou wilt be perfect*, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me." (Matt. xix. 18.) The Searcher of hearts had not to probe, but only to touch the disease of that heart in the right place, in its festering depth, and the young man's whole structure of morals fell to the ground: "Whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one commandment, he is guilty of all." (James ii. 10, 11.)

"When the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful: for he had great possessions." His treasure was upon earth, and his heart was here also. Who can understand the wounds, and bruises, and putrefying sores of the human heart but God? "The tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity: so is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell. For every kind of beasts, and of birds, and of serpents, and of things in the sea, is tamed, and hath been tamed of mankind: but the tongue can no man tame; it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison. Therewith bless we God, even the Father; and therewith curse we men,

which are made after the similitude of God. Out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things *ought not so to be.*" (James iii.)

This is another phase of the human heart. I have seen this gangrene, mortification, putrefaction, in their most loathsome state; I have seen out of the same mouth proceed cursing and blessing, and from those who stood before God with the bold effrontery, "What lack I yet?" "My brethren, these things ought not so to be:" for it seems to me the most easy thing in the world to govern the tongue. "Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth: keep the door of my lips." But the derangement is in the heart,—the heart is the volume of life,—the centre around which all gravitates; the attraction of the lesser orbs, the loadstone of all affinities, the strong power of repulsion. Hearts are not the great ships, "driven of fierce winds," but the broad ocean of life itself! Can this be governed? Yes: "Here shall thy proud waves be stayed;" "He arose, and rebuked the winds and the sea; and there was a great calm" (Matt. viii. 26); "Master, master, we perish. Then he arose, and rebuked the wind and the raging of the water: and they ceased, and there was a calm. And he said unto them, Where is your faith? And they being afraid wondered, saying one to another, What manner of man is this! for he commandeth even the winds and water, and they obey him." (Luke viii. 24, 25.) Yes, the Captain of our salvation is the controller of the life within; and it is this subjection of the life to Him, I would urge the necessity

of; the command and victory over that sea of life, which rises in brakes and billows,—in unholy rebellion against the kingdom of God. “I know that for my sake this great tempest is upon you ;” but it is when we have seen Christ in this sea of atoning suffering, in “the belly of hell,” that the sea becomes calm to us, that self is prostrated, the nature of sin fathomed, the height of God’s throne scanned, the “grievous sore” of evil felt, the hell of ourselves subdued, “the sea ceased from her raging.” (Jonah i. 12, 15 ; ii. 2.)

“Whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world : and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.” There are resources in God ; and He has provided holy, lawful, and ample resources in every soul, which, if duly exercised, and developed by use, are sufficient to counteract and to overcome the law of sin which is in our carnal nature ; it may to the last struggle to rise against the law of the mind, but by faith we are triumphant in the triumph of our Head. He has not provided more for the redemption of man in the absolute and abstract sense than He has for the practical and the positive : the restoration of the Spirit to the errant orb of man’s heart was the purchase of His blood : “Ye are bought with a price : therefore *glorify* God in your body, and in your *spirits*, which are God’s.” But our cry must be, “Master, master, we perish.”

“What lack I yet? Let us ask ourselves honestly this question, and only answer it in the comparison of ourselves with Christ. Do we lack His humility? His charity? His

self-denial? His tenderness? Peter, from His teaching that young man, took occasion to inquire, "We have forsaken all, and followed thee; what shall we have therefore? And Jesus said unto them, Verily, I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the *regeneration*, when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." (Matt. xix. 27, 28.) This is now fulfilled; Christ is on the throne of His *glory*, and the whole body of the Apostolic Church who are following Him in the regeneration are sitting with Him upon thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. Regeneration is glory. And so those who follow Christ in the coming regeneration, will still sit with Him in the throne of His glory, as she has hitherto done.

When the Church was to produce a John the Baptist, it was written of his parents: "They were both walking in all the *commandments* and *ordinances* of the Lord *blameless*." (Luke i. 6.) And when she had begotten the Anointed One, it was written: "This is he that came by water and blood, Jesus Christ; not by water only, but by water and blood." (1 John v. 6.) I shall prove to you, later, that this means begotten through faith in the Word, by the living water of the living Word, "of the Holy Ghost." "It is the Spirit which beareth witness, because the Spirit is *truth*." Here are the two agencies of the immaculate conception, the natural and the supernatural, "the Spirit of truth," the water and the blood.

And so I believe that faith, and *truth*, working in concert with

the scriptural commendation, "walking in all the *commandments* and *ordinances of the Lord blameless*," ever will go on to produce benefit and spiritual life to the Church; that the resurrection itself will be an effect of cause (Rom. viii. 11; vi. 4); and that "the life of God," engendered through Christ, will still stretch onward: "He shall be called the Son of the Highest. And of his kingdom there shall be no end." (Luke i. 32, 33.)

Therefore, let us look again at the imperativeness of the Gospel upon the subject of obedience. The parallel passage in St. Luke with that in St. Matthew from which I have before quoted is even more expressive: "Why call ye me Lord, Lord, and *do not* the things which I say? Whosoever cometh to me, and heareth my sayings, and *doeth* them, I will show you to whom he is like: He is like a man which built an house, and *digged deep*, and laid the foundation on a rock: and when the flood arose, the stream beat *vehemently* upon that house, and *could not shake it*: for it was founded upon a rock." (vi. 46—48.)

And hence the *twofold* teaching of St. James: "Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect. And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham *believed God*, and it was imputed unto him *for righteousness*. As the body without the Spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also." (ii. 21—26.)

And hence, too, the *twofold* teaching throughout our Sa-

viour's ministry: "God heareth not sinners: but if any man be a *worshipper* of God, *and doeth* his will, him he heareth." (John ix. 31.)

"My mother and my brethren are these which hear the word of God, and *do it*." (Luke viii. 21.)

"If ye love me, *keep my commandments*. And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; even the Spirit of truth. He shall teach you all things." (John xiv. 15—17, 26.) Knowledge is the parent of faith, and faith the parent of life, and of life eternal; therefore it must be very important that we should keep God's commandments in the very spirit of the holiness of God, since the promise of the gift of "the Spirit" is made a condition of obedience; it is the most glorious gift that God can bestow upon us upon earth; it is that light, life, and power of God through Christ, which lead us on from light to light, from truth to truth, from glory to glory, from life to life, till in Spirit we "see God;" see Him upon His "throne, *high* and lifted up," and thus seeing Him, we are assimilated to Him, and made fit to dwell with Him. Then let the glorious promise be ever indelibly engraven upon our hearts and minds: "Even the Spirit of truth." For, on the other hand, we know not into what depths of error and of darkness, of evil and of death, we may be left to fall, if we resist "the Spirit of holiness" and "the Spirit of truth." That the world can neither receive nor see these, should be to us an awful beacon of danger in our journey through life.

“Lord, *how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us*, and not unto the world? Jesus answered and said, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.” (xiv. 21—23.) “If ye *keep my commandments*, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father’s commandments, and abide in his love.” (xv. 10.)

The grand summary of the Decalogue, as given to the Pharisees, Sadducees, and lawyers, when they would have tempted Christ, that is, would have entangled Him by questions, is too concentrated, and yet too vast, too comprehensive, and there is in it too much of the essential nature of His kingdom, for us to add one word to it, or to take away therefrom: “Master, which is the great commandment in the law? Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.” (Matt. xxii. 36—40.) This was a Divine compendium of the system of ethics. A more high and glorious altitude than this could not be reared upon earth; and we feel how high and glorious must be “the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ,” to bring that glory, “the Spirit of Truth,” to earth, to enable us to love God with all our heart, and soul, and mind, and our neighbour as ourself.

But although we may not add to this Divine summary of

the Decalogue, we may turn to Christ's own beautiful illustration of it in the parallel passage in St. Luke. (x. 29—37.) The lawyer, "willing to justify himself, said unto Jesus, Who is my neighbour? And Jesus answering said, A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead." This man was a type of the multitude, who are stripped of innocence, wounded by sin, and half dead from the assaults of Satan upon the soul: "He was a murderer from the beginning."

"And *by chance*"—this was a strange expression for Christ to use: not a watchman upon his duty, in vigilant look-out for the thief who comes to kill and to destroy; not a shepherd tending his flock from harm, not an ordained minister of Christ, diligent in the momentous duty of his high calling, but, "by *chance* there came down a certain priest that way: and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side." This callous indifference to suffering and distress is quite on a par with the stray priest. He had wandered from the path of duty, and, inevitably, duty must be passed by: "He passed by on the other side."

"And likewise a Levite, when he was at the place, came and looked on him, and passed by on the other side." Was not this cold-hearted indifference, this want of the commonest compassion of our nature, to say nothing of clerical duty, a miserable contrast to the faithfulness of the Preacher, who from his heavenly calling never for a moment swerved?

"But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he

was : and when he saw him, he had compassion on him, and went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him." This good Samaritan was not there by *chance*, he was upon the journey of life, he had compassion in his bosom for whatever circumstance of life it might be required ; and he had with him oil and wine, the balm of the consolations of the Gospel, the unction of the Spirit of God. He gave up to the wounded man the beast which had helped him forward on his journey, and he placed him in a place of refuge, with the charge, "Take care of him," and he promised to see him again, thereby betraying the deep, genuine sympathy of his soul.

"Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbour unto him that fell among the thieves ? And he said, He that showed mercy on him. Then said Jesus unto him, *Go, and do thou likewise.*" Upon this beautiful illustration of the entire Decalogue I will not say a word ; but to the stray priest, to the wandering Levite of the Christian Church, I would say, to you who preach Christ, but have never learned the law from His lips ; to you, to whom that law is intended to be a schoolmaster to bring you to his feet ; to you I would say, "*Go, and do thou likewise.*"

The moral instinct of the renewed nature is that which is taught us, to be listened to throughout the whole of the New Testament, rather than the severe justice of the naked letter of the law, which, in its rigid exaction, was a type of the holiness of the Gospel. Christ fulfilled the law, and His fulfil-

ment of it brought in the life and power for us to fulfil it too: still there is written over our poor, low attainment, "If ye had known what this meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice, ye would not have condemned the guiltless. Mercy rejoiceth against judgment."

The law of love, of charity, of benevolence, of impulsive kind action, and of forgiveness, is the moral law, and the man who has not these, who bears no such fruits of the Spirit, is an immoral man: "Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law." (Rom. xiii. 10.) "If ye fulfil the *royal law* according to the Scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, ye do well." (James ii. 8.) That *royal law* is the spiritual law of the kingdom of Melchisedec, "The King of Righteousness, the King of Peace." I will not say it superseded, but that it was the fulfilment of the law of Moses: and, therefore, I would have for ever in my mind's eye, and indelibly written upon my heart, the superlative of our great Lawgiver, Christ, "But I say unto you." "But I say unto you." (Matt. v. 22, 28, 32, 34, 37, 39, 44.)

But turn with me again for a moment to this supernatural moral elevation reared by Him, "But I say unto you." "But I say unto you." I say again, track on this moral elevation till we scale the height of the Eternal Throne itself, "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." Who can attain to it? Who can lead others onward and upward till earth blends with heaven? Christ alone can do it: "I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto

me." How? By "The law of life," which proceeds from himself. (2 Pet. i. 4.) He, the Head of the Church, is giving life to the Church. It is not talent that is wanted in her, it is not learning, it is not eloquence; it is moderation, meekness, temperance, charity, forbearance, humility, a meek, and quiet, and loving spirit; against such there is no law.

Declamation and strife, anathemas and anger do no good; "the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God." Men must be more temperate, more ready in honour to prefer one another. These are all superlatives: "But when thou doest alms;" "But when thou prayest;" "But thou, when thou fastest." Let us listen more to these monitions of the inner life: and heed less both the praises and the reproaches of men. "I receive not honour from men."

"Whosoever is *born of God* doth not commit sin." This teaching of St. John was borrowed from that of his Master's, "Except a man be born again of water and of the Spirit." This life of God is a law of holiness: "The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death." (Rom. viii. 2.) And St. Paul said again, "Like as Christ was raised from the dead *by the glory of the Father*, even so we also should walk in newness of life." (vi. 4.)

What was that *glory* by which Christ was raised from the dead? It was the essential holiness of the Father. And this was the meaning of that gracious manifestation which God made of himself to Moses. (Exod. xxxiii. 19—22.) Moses said, "I beseech thee show me thy glory." Show me thy holiness. What a request! "There shall no man see me,

and live." "It shall come to pass, while my glory passeth by, that I will put thee in a clift of the rock, and will cover thee with my hand while I pass by: and I will take away mine hand, and thou shalt see my back parts: but my face shall not be seen." This is one of the most remarkable manifestations of God recorded in the Old Testament. What did it mean? Moses was a type of Christ as Deliverer, Leader, Lawgiver; the Son only did "see the Father." (John i. 18.) As the Sacrifice for sin, he saw His holiness, His justice: but in doing so, as the victim who "was made sin," He died. "There shall no man see me, and live." But when the sin of the world was consumed upon the altar of God's own nature, when the Sacrifice "without spot to God," was then offered, He was raised from the dead by the *glory* of the Father; by the essential holiness in which He had laid down His life. "I have power to lay down my life, and I have power to take it again."

But Moses was, too, a type of the Church of this dispensation after Christ, and as such God said to him, "Thou canst not see my face: for there shall no man see me and live." He left him for a moment to show him his fallibility, his presumption, the innate sinfulness of his nature. (Num. xx. 10.) As he had desired, "The *glory* of the Lord appeared unto him" (xx. 6), but it was death to him; the sentence of death was immediately passed upon him. (xx. 12; Deut. xxxii. 48, 50—52.)

Let us beware; let the Church beware how she asks to see the holiness, the glory of God; but before she can be clothed in His *glory* in heaven (Rev. xxi. 11), she must, like Moses,

s *glory here*. He will pass by in His glory, but like she will die: "Without the law *sin was dead*. For I *ve without the law* once: but when the commandment *in revived*, and *I died*. And the commandment, which *lained to life*, I found to be *unto death*. For sin, occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by *me*. Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment, and just, and good. Was then that which is *made death unto me*? God forbid. *But sin*, that it *appear sin*, working *death in me* by that which is good; by the commandment might become *exceeding sinful*. I know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold *in*." (Rom. vii.)

has passed by before His Church in goodness, mercy, gracious condescension, and proclaimed the name of God before her; but now He is about to pass by in His own His essential holiness, to teach her that *sin* is exceeding sinful: that sin may revive, and she die: to teach her the relative of His law, "But I say unto you." "It shall not pass, while my glory passeth by, that I will put thee on the left of the rock. Thou shalt see my back parts: but mine eyes shall not be seen."

" Rock of ages, cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in thee."

can only see the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. (2 Cor. iv. 6.) We may see His back parts, but His holiness would consume us in a moment if Christ did not stand in the breach. When Moses had seen it, he could

say, "The Lord thy God is a consuming fire." (Deut. iv. 24; Heb. xii. 29.) All His dealings with us are to teach us this, that we may see our salvation, and His glory in Christ. "Ye are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be *married to another*, to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth *fruit unto God*." (Rom. vii. 4.) And hence David's sublime, prophetic anthem, "Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? or who shall stand in his holy place? He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully. He shall *receive the blessing* from the Lord, and righteousness from the God of his salvation. Lift up your heads, O ye gates: and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the *King of glory* shall come in. Who is this King of glory? The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle. Lift up your heads, O ye gates; even lift them up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in. Who is this King of glory? The Lord of hosts, he is the King of glory." (Ps. xxiv.) This referred to "the Son of the *Highest*," when He brought this law of heaven to earth. This is the moral elevation to which He will lead His Church till heaven be established upon earth. "We all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord." (2 Cor. iii. 17.) The glory of God is not an extraneous splendour, majesty, or sublimity; it is His essential holiness, and hence the engraving of the priestly mitre, HOLINESS TO THE LORD. (Exod. xxxix. 30.)

The Church is not to be caught up *in sin* to meet the Lord in the air, as some people ignorantly suppose. She is, in the long ages of the future, to be sanctified and cleansed with the washing of water by the Word. "Cleanse me, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow."

"The throne of God" is language often used in Scripture to signify this moral elevation. "I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. Above it stood the seraphims: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly. And one cried unto another, and said, *Holy, holy, holy* is the Lord of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory." (Isa. vi.) It will be seen in a moment that this expression of adoration was evoked by a deep consciousness of the holiness of God; His attributes were seen, and prostration, adoration, confession, and a covering of the flesh from His presence were the result: "Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips."

St. John gives us the same description: "I was in the Spirit: and, behold, a *throne* was set in heaven, and one sat on the throne. And he that sat was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone." (Rev. iv.) Here, too, is the adoration, and the same terrible consciousness of sin: "*Holy, holy, holy*, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come." If we would attain to the same knowledge and appreciation of the moral elevation of God's throne: and if we would have this same consciousness of ourselves as undone

sinner, we must adore Him as we see Him seated in His word. (1 Sam. iv. 4; 2 Sam. vi. 2; 2 Kings xix. 15; Ps. x. 1; Ezek. i. 21—28; x. 3—5.) And if we would rise to the moral elevation of His throne, “without fault before the throne of God” (Rev. xiv. 5), we must *obey* Him as we *see* Him sitting in that Word, holy, and unchangeable—“Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my word shall not pass away.” “I will commune with thee from between the two cherubims.”

Has the High and Holy One, the Son of the Highest, ever thus passed by before us in His glory, hiding us in a clift of the rock while He did so? If He has not, we may be dreaming, “What lack I yet?” At peace with inadequate conceptions of the foul, deep, vile, awful nature of sin and of ourselves; but if He has thus passed by us in His glory, and His voice heard and listened to, “But I say unto you,” to teach us that He is not only our righteousness, but our sanctification also; then we shall with joy and adoration meet Him upon that throne, high and lifted up, “having the glory of God.” (Rev. xxi. 10, 11.)

This, then, was the Decalogue in the hands of the Redeemer of the world, and it must be the same in the hands of the Church.

But even the Decalogue in the hands of the Redeemer of the world seemed almost eclipsed by the ethical grandeur of His death: “He became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.” (Phil. ii. 8.) And as we see Him engulfed in the vortex, in the very essential element of sin, and of the

curse, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" this was hell; and as we hear Him from that depth interceding for his enemies, for his murderers, "Father, forgive them," this prayer of blood is the pure incense always rising up from the angel's hand. Oh, I say, this was a moral splendour which radiated our world; it was "the glory of the Father, and thus it was that henceforward the risen body of the Holy One was to be the dwelling-place of God." (Phil. ii. 9, 10; Rev. xxi. 3—22; 1 Cor. xv. 28.) The moral splendour of the cross was the moral splendour of our world, for "Christ there abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel." (2 Tim. i. 10.)

If God gave the following Divine notification to the Jewish Church, how much more to the Christian! "Behold, I send an Angel before thee, *to keep thee in the way*, and to bring thee into the place which *I have prepared*. Beware of him, and *obey his voice*, provoke him not; for he *will not* pardon your transgressions: for my name is in him. But if thou shalt indeed obey his voice, and do all that I speak; then I will be an enemy unto thine enemies, and an adversary unto thine adversaries." (Exod. xxiii. 20—22.) Has the Christian Church followed Him? Has she obeyed His voice? Then to the nine beatitudes of this sermon on the holy mount, I will add one more of their own order: "*Blessed* is the man whom thou chastenest, O Lord, and teachest him out of thy law." O Lord, give us grace to be content with the *superior* benediction!

CHAPTER IV.

ON THE PARABLES OF CHRIST.

IN the ministry of Christ I come now to His Parables. Here we find two meanings, so distinct, that not to accept both would be a miserable rejection of the one-half of Revelation. There is the plain, literal meaning of these parables, that which is in a moment apparent upon the surface, which relates to our human economy, and which is graciously, wisely, and beautifully adapted to it; and again, there is an underlying meaning, more deep and solemn, and divinely adapted to the soul. Let us read both: the underlying, spiritual meaning for the sustenance and Divine life of the soul; and I am sure the Divine precept for the building up of the moral structure will be voluntarily and impulsively received. But let us beware lest we take the last for our foundation to build upon instead of the first, or else I may say of the parables of Christ, and indeed of all his teaching, what He Himself said in his wonderful winding up of the Decalogue, when "the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house, and it fell: and great was the fall of it." (Matt. vii. 25—27.) Reve-

lation is duplex—complex, and these two verses govern the two economies of it. They were indeed a marvellous winding up of the Sermon on the Mount; our spiritual nature was more manifestly declared; the kingdom of God was nigh unto us.

The Romish Church, and, I may add, a very large party in our own Church, read the letter of these parables, of the whole Bible, and reject, despise—or they do not dive to the spiritual meaning, and hence that spiritual death, and that night of moral darkness which has closed upon them, because, as I have shown you, true morality, in the sight of God, can only be the spontaneous growth of the spiritual life within: “Unto you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God: but unto them that are without, all these things are done in parables: that seeing they may see, and not perceive; and hearing they may hear, and not understand; lest at any time they should be converted, and their sins should be forgiven them.” (Mark iv. 11, 12.) In textual divinity this passage is difficult, almost incomprehensible, and despotic; but standing in a revelation intended to be grasped as a Divine system, it is lucid, and the dealing of God with men just. We must look back in the past at his longsuffering with the Jewish Church, at the striving of his Spirit with her. We must remember that she had committed the sin of blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, which could not be forgiven” (Matt. xii. 31, 32); that is, she had despised the day of grace, covenant mercy, the kingdom of God, and chosen the

things of this world in their stead. Christ's preaching took in a large circumference. He spoke of Bodies. His Church of the past, present, and in her spiritual continuity, was always the burden of His teaching, of His every thought. Therefore, if this chapter from which I have quoted be read connectedly, it will be seen that the Jewish Church had been unfaithful to her trust, to her stewardship; she had been a wayside, a stony-ground hearer, a thorny-ground hearer herself, because this was the parable in question. And more, she had not only despised the seed of the Word herself, but in doing so, she had failed to communicate the light of truth to others. "Is a candle brought to be put under a bushel, or under a bed? and not to be set on a candlestick?" (iv. 21.) This was the point at issue; and then, as Christ took from the Jewish Church the true riches and committed them to the Apostles, He simply pronounced upon her the sentence of condemnation. Her day of Divine favour for His work was gone; the power to perceive, herself, and to instruct others, was judicially, and for His people, graciously taken away. There is in this life a judgment of condemnation, a cutting off from the life of God, as much as there ever will be in another, if not the same infliction of punishment. (John xv. 24; xi. 26.) And thus it was St. John said, "There is a sin unto death: I do not say that ye shall pray for it." (1 Epist. v. 16.)

Looking at the subject in this manner seems to explain to us the why and the wherefore of the parabolical style of the

sacred writings, of prophecy; the Eternal Spirit has them in his own power, to teach or to condemn, to open heaven or to shut it: "Unto you it is *given* to know the mystery of the kingdom of God: but unto them that are without, all these things are done in parables: that seeing they may see, and not perceive; and hearing they may hear, and not understand; lest at any time they should be converted, and their sins should be forgiven them." Oh, awful fiat! it is in time the condemnation of the lost; and as we see the Jewish Church dead (Ezek. xxxvii.; Rev. xi.), we understand the Divine sentence, and the justice of it. "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" "If our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost." "If ye were blind ye should have no sin: but now ye say, We see; therefore your sin remaineth."

This glance at the why and the wherefore of the parabolical character of the Scriptures will enable us better to understand our Saviour's parables.

The parable of the wise and foolish virgins is a very important one in his ministry. Two distinct voices seem to issue from His teaching: one to every individual creature, and one to the body of the priesthood; while He taught the one, He supplied the other with matter for His service. I am sure the bulk of His teaching concerned them as responsible agents. Let us try to grasp this phase of it as it is presented to us broadcast.

The lamps of the tabernacle supplied the metaphor of this

parable. (Num. viii. 1, 2 ; Exod. xxvii. 20.) They typified "the seven Spirits of God before the throne" (Rev. i. 4), or the One Eternal Spirit in God's ministers: "the seven stars are the angels of the seven churches." (i. 4—20.) See them too in heaven, in that glorified representative body of the Church on earth there. (iv. 5.) What would our Bible be without a God enthroned there? (Ezek. i. 21 ; x. 5 ; Ps. lxxx. 1 ; Rev. v. 5.) And what would the priesthood be without the Spirit of God reigning in them, speaking in them? Foolish. "Let your loins be girded about with truth, and your lights burning:" "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the Churches." The voice of man can never reach the heart, the voice of the Spirit alone can.

Trace the teaching which led to this parable. Christ said to the Pharisees, Scribes, and Sadducees, "Ye *blind* guides, woe unto you. Thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee. Behold, your house is left unto you desolate." (Matt. xxiii.) And then, in the twenty-fourth chapter is one of the most remarkable prophecies in His ministry,—of the destruction of Jerusalem, with many other woes and calamities, still unfulfilled: "But the *end is not yet*. All these are *the beginning of sorrows*." Then He spake of coming to judgment, and bade His *disciples* watch. "Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his lord hath made ruler over his household, to *give them meat* in due season? *Blessed* is that servant, whom his lord when he

cometh shall find so doing." Then, after telling them of the terrible judgments which should overtake the unfaithful, He spake this parable of the Ten Virgins: "*Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom.*" Then, in the day of judgment; but not one word of trial, of condemnation, or of acquittal, but the bare, naked fact, "Five of them were wise, and five were foolish. They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them; but the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps." Provision and destitution are what is expressed,—"*Our lamps are gone out. They went to buy:*" but we are not told that they were able to buy. "*Lord, Lord, open to us. But he answered and said, I know you not.*" No Divine Presence in them, no credential commended them to their sovereign Lord. "*I know you not.*" The doctrine of a duplex nature is what is here distinctly taught, just as the star and the angel are seen to be one being; "*the angel and the star one.*" (Rev. i. 20; ii. 1; iii. 1.) "*It is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth. He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself.*" (1 John v. 6—10.) And St. Paul says, "*After that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest (or the credential) of our inheritance*" (Eph. i. 13); and hence the remarkable expression in our Saviour's teaching upon the subject of humility, and of avoiding offences. He had said to His disciples, "*except they became as little children, they could not*

enter into the kingdom of heaven ; ” and then, in teaching them not to despise those who had been so converted, and had so received the grace of His kingdom, He added, “ their *angels* do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven ” (Matt. xviii.) ; meaning, the indwelling Spirit in them ; as the Spirit is in another place called an “ Intercessor in them.” (Rom. viii. 26.) *Believer*, do you know what it is always to behold the face of the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ which is in heaven ? Do you know what it is always to live in His presence, to have your mind and spirit always lifted up to Him ? If you do, you have the witness of the Spirit in yourself. He is your seal, your Intercessor, your ever-present God ; and you are God’s angel ; and hence the benediction, and the malediction, so emphatically pronounced by Christ, “ Whoso shall offend one of these little ones which *believe in me*, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea. Whoso shall receive one such in my name receiveth me.” Believer, do you alway behold the face of *your* Father which is in heaven ? (John xx. 17.) Is His Spirit your spirit, your Intercessor, your seal ? Then He is your guide, your angel. (Exod. xxiii. 20—23.) Christ’s Father is your Father, and you can never hear that sentence of eternal separation and condemnation passed upon you : “ I know you not.” You have the credential, and the robe of the kingdom of God : you are ready, and you may go in with Him to the marriage.

The parable of the Talents occurs immediately after this of

the Ten Virgins. I do not say that it relates to the divinely-instituted order of the Priesthood only. Every being has his talent, of which he must give an account; but it is impossible to read our Saviour's ministry connectedly, and not to perceive how He instructed them for their office,—how He took the new order as a body, and made known to them that they would be held responsible for the gifts and talents bestowed upon them for the salvation of souls. He is too just, too high, and too holy a Being to be partial, to bestow favour without holding a body responsible for grace thus received. This phase of our Blessed Lord's teaching as Himself the Head of the Church, the example of that priesthood, cannot be overlooked without imminent peril to her and to them. The very opening of this parable sets before us a picture of Himself, the Shepherd and Bishop of souls, in the midst of His servants, delivering His charge to them.

"The kingdom of heaven is as a man travelling into a *far country*, who called his *own* servants, and delivered unto them his goods. And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one; to every man according to his several ability; and straightway took his journey. After a *long time* the lord of those servants cometh, and reckoneth with them." (Matt. xxv.) Can anything be more expressive than this of the true riches of the kingdom of God committed to His servants? Spiritual gifts are talents, true riches. And how encouraging the promise to the faithful! "Unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance." It had been said to the Jewish Church, "The

kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof" (Matt. xxi. 43); and hence all this mass of divine teaching at the giving of the great trust. I am often astonished as I hear teachers teaching others, and preachers preaching to others, that they are not overawed and overpowered by their own responsibility, by the Word preached to themselves.

It is very remarkable that that stupendous and *singular* description of the last judgment should occur immediately after these two parables of the Ten Virgins, and the Talents. The last of these closes with the punishment of the slothful servant, "Cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." I am sure this referred to bodies of men as to individuals; just as we see the Jewish Church then about to be cast out into outer darkness (Luke xvi. 23—27); and then occurred the description of the last judgment. In it two parties only are described,—the faithful and the unfaithful, the righteous and the wicked; as in the preceding parable, there are only the wise and the foolish.

The character of the sentence of acquittal and of condemnation is singular, deep, and discriminating: no mention of murderers, thieves, covetous, or unclean persons; none of vile actions; no empanelled jury to decide the case; no judge in robes of office to pass the sentence of civil law, but simply, "When the Son of man shall come in his glory, then shall he sit upon *the throne of his glory*." (Ib. xxv. 31.) What does it mean? what is the real meaning of the word glory

and glorified? God's glory does not mean what some uninstructed persons think it to be,—an element, an ether ocean of incomprehensible brilliancy. Those who think this are of the “foolish,” who have no oil in their lamps. “The throne of his glory” signifies supremely enthroned in holiness, in the essential perfection of His own attributes, of His own nature. “He shall be called the Son of the Highest” (Luke i. 32); “Christ was raised from the dead by the *glory* of the Father.” (Rom. vi. 4; Isaiah vi. 6; Rev. iv. 2.) This knowledge of God, and of God in Christ, is an acquirement of longteaching, of long progress in the Divine life; but till He has graciously taught it us by experience, we are not prepared to stand at His right hand when He shall sit upon “the throne of his glory.” Let us look at the stupendous arraignment as it lies before us.

“Then shall the *King* say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye *blessed* of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.” This King is that Being supreme in holiness. “God is a Spirit,” his kingdom is spiritual; in his first advent He came to tell us this, to transform the letter of the law into a spiritual law by the power and life of the Spirit which He brought home to us; as I have shown you in the Decalogue, He came to magnify, to fulfil the law, to make it honourable. He was Himself, if I may use the expression, a concentration of the essential attributes of the Father; of His love, His holiness, His glory. “It pleased the Father that in Him should all fulness dwell.” And thus do we understand Trinity in Unity, and

Unity in Trinity. "Behold my servant whom I uphold; I have put my Spirit upon him." (Isaiah xlii. 1.) "Christ, through the Eternal Spirit, offered himself without spot to God." (Heb. ix. 14.) There was no dividing of the substance of the Godhead; but the attributes of God, his essential holiness, which is his glory, dwelt in Christ; just as He was designated "Wisdom," "The Truth," "The Word." (Prov. viii.) All these dwelt in Him, the fulness of them so abounding, the nature of God so complete and absolute, that Christ the anointed One was God. Essential, unforfeited "Life," He died of sin, to take away the sin of the world, but He rose again from the dead by "the glory of the Father." David compassed this marvellous doctrine, this doctrine of life—"Thou wilt not suffer thine Holy One to see corruption;" and then he added, and oh, let us be sure that we are all able to add the same, "*Thou wilt show me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy.*" (Psalm xvi. 10, 11.) This takes us back again, or rather forward to the judgment day, "when the Son of man shall come in his glory, and shall sit upon the throne of his glory."

As we have seen, judgment will not then proceed by civil law, but by that spiritual law of which He was the lawgiver, and the giver of divine power to fulfil it. Let us look at this trial by the Decalogue, by the standard of the moral code He so admirably and divinely propounded to us. 'To them on his right hand he shall say, "I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: naked, and ye clothed me:

as sick, and ye visited me : I was in prison, and ye came unto me." The three following "whens" in the answer of the zealous, "Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee?"

us, how *native*—no, not native, but how absolutely lived—must have been "the law of the Spirit" of love, and of true benevolence, to be themselves all unconscious of having been kind. Ingenuous, impulsive love, all is beautiful to behold, it is glory. "And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these *my brethren*, ye have done it unto me." As we look back upon Christ's alliance of himself with the human family,—"*My brethren*," upon his humiliation and self-denial, not wishing that any one should do kindness to Him; and then, as we look forward to the day of judgment, and see Him with his heart full of tenderness to his brethren, One with them; as we hear of the yearning love of that soul, giving expression to it in love, inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these *brethren*, ye have done it unto me;" I ask, is not this glory? Do we understand the expression, "The Son of man shall sit upon the throne of his glory?" Do we understand St. John when he said, "Immediately I was in the Spirit: and, behold, a throne was set in heaven?" (Rev. 2.) Do we understand how the altitude of that throne, how the justice and holiness of it exacted a victim, a vicarious

sacrifice equivalent to the sin of the world to be expunged? And do we wonder that those who refuse grace and pardon from the hand of "the Holy One," should have to meet Him again at the bar of his Holiness, before that throne "set in Heaven, high and lifted up?"

And we must not confine this trial, then, to its literal rendering. When Christ was upon earth, I do not remember his ever having performed a miracle to supply temporal necessity without its being capable of a spiritual interpretation. And now, is there no spiritual hunger or thirst, no spiritual destitution or sickness? Are there now no stewards to whom Christ has intrusted the true riches, to whom He is saying, and to whom He will say in the day of judgment, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me"? Then, to them who have done so, He will say, "Come, ye *blessed* of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." To be truly *blessed* of God, is to be glorified together with Him, to be in an eternal beatitude of light, knowledge, peace, calm, repose, joy, perfection, splendour, glory; "Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father" (Matt. xiii. 43), "having the glory of God." (Rev. xxi. 11.) That is, His essential holiness so bestowed and incorporate, as to be for ever impregnable to seduction and sin; and, consequently, to be incapable of suffering, trouble, conflict, and remorse. "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God." Our Father, which

art in Heaven, make us pure now, that we may see Thee, and receive Thy holy benediction ! “Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.”

“Then shall the King say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.” (Matt. xxv. 41.) The King is the Son of man, who is seen sitting upon the throne of his glory. (Matt. xxv. 31.) “Then shall *the King* say, Come, ye blessed of *my Father*.” (34th verse.) Christ, the despised outcast, the spitted and railed upon, King ! “King of righteousness ; King of Peace” (Heb. vii. 2), the King of glory, who might have been, to all, holiness, righteousness, peace, is here, not only a Judge to condemn, but the pronouncer of an anathema, black, mysterious, deep ;—“ye cursed.” He had himself borne the curse, felt its fire. He had drunk deep of the cup of hell ; but here, enthroned in glory, relentlessly, authoritatively, without a shadow of tenderness, or palliation of crime, He says, “Depart, ye cursed.” You who are still under condemnation, depart, to endure for ever the fire prepared for you ; because the servants of the devil are his angels. Oh, let us beware how we trifle with sin, with grace, with the *holiness* of God ! His throne is very high, it never can be lowered. “Ye shall be holy : for I the Lord your God am holy.”

“For I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat : I was

thirsty, and ye gave me no drink : I was a stranger, and ye took me not in : naked, and ye clothed me not : sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not." Here, the literal, and the spiritual signification, go hand in hand ; he who has truly the law of love written in his heart by the Spirit of God will read both, and do both ; while he who has not, though he bestow all his goods to feed the poor, and add to his charity the supererogation of giving his body to be burned, still, they will profit him nothing.

What pure love to God and to our neighbour prompts us to do, will be accepted of Him. "The Lord seeth not as man seeth ; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart." (1 Sam. xvi. 7.)

And hence the reply of the "cursed ;" "Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee ?" We see here a perfectly dead state, an utter unconsciousness of the absence of the law of kindness, an utter ignorance of the law of love in the true sense of the term ; but the King of glory, of superlative attribute, would then teach them, "Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me." In the realm of space there cannot be found a more Godlike attribute than this : His people's cause one with Himself, their temporal comfort His concern, their everlasting life His care. At this point in the trial at the last judgment, let us glance back at the two parables which precede it, the ten virgins : "I know you not." (xxv. 12.) And the talents, "The

kingdom of heaven is as a man travelling into a far country, who called his *own servants*, and delivered unto them his goods." (Matt. xxv. 14.) Oh, *servants* of Christ ! I would say, not only, do not trifle with sin, but do not trifle with souls ; the Judge of all the earth will require them at your hand, His judgment must be a right one. Love to His people, the advancement of His kingdom by all the means in our power, should be to us the most sacred cause of our lives. If we would know whether a servant is seeking his own glory or the glory of his Divine Master, we can have no surer test than this : is he in sympathy with the labours of others, or only with his own ? Is the cause of Christ sacred to him, because it is His cause ? Does he love the people of God, because they are His people ? Is he in honour preferring others to himself ? These things will determine the decision of the last judgment. And thus it was that the Judge, the searcher of hearts could say, "The Kingdom of God cometh not with observation : the kingdom of God is within you." (Luke xii. 20.) In the figurative language of the Apocalypse this last judgment is otherwise described, but with the same intense meaning ; men's own consciences being their judges, the appeal is one and the same as this in St. Matthew, "There was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour." (Rev. viii. 1.)

The ban of eternal excommunication in the winding up of this last judgment is most awful : "These shall go away into everlasting punishment : but the righteous into life eternal."

Our future state will be but a continuity, a perfected, or a cursed state of that which is begun here. It is very remarkable that the parable of the nobleman who went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return, "Occupy till I come," which it would seem is parallel with that of the talents, winds up with the same denunciation of judgment: "Those mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay them before me." (Luke xix. 12—27.)

The end of every man's life is a day of judgment; and the end of each dispensation is a day of judgment. "Son of man," "Son of the Highest," let me see Thee sitting upon the throne of thy glory! "Show me thy glory."

This sublime description of the last judgment, as related by St. Matthew, was the winding up of Christ's parables, and indeed of his ministry, but I have gone through it here, that our minds may be the more solemnized and the better prepared both to understand His parables and miracles, and to meditate upon that ministry. I am sure we shall see, when we have gone through them, that they very particularly related to His servants as a divinely-instituted priesthood.

The thirteenth chapter of St. Matthew is one of parables. There are those who tell us that when we begin to talk about the metaphor of Scripture, we are lost in an inextricable labyrinth; but I would only ask, What do those lose who reject it? What is a parable? A comparison, an allegory, a similitude: "Without a parable spake he not unto them."

The parable of the leaven, must strike us as one of the most gracious and adequate of these. "The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened." (xiii. 33.)

Let us look first at the material, and then at the thing signified, at that which is immaterial and spiritual. The material is the meal, dead, heavy; as it is, useless for food of man, but the woman adds the enlivening quality, and the whole is quickened, and made fit sustenance for her house, the staff of life for her house. And "the kingdom of God" is like unto this leaven, and the Church is to be as this woman; she is to take the leaven of the Word, the essential nature of the kingdom of God, to cause it to be inwrought in the human family till the whole be quickened, leavened. The nature of that kingdom is essential life, invisible, noiseless as the passing wind; no clash of Omnipotent Power, no rolling thunder of justice to shake the spheres, no blasts of Divine strength or assertions of visible Divine authorities, no floods of mercy to defeat justice, no great and majestic demonstrations of grace to lead on to victory, to daunt and to fright the enemy and the presumptuous; but now that the work of Christ is done, the kingdom of God is as leaven, which a woman took and hid in meal.

We are not now to expect new voices, new revelations, new institutions, no new phenomena of nature, or of grace; but "the Spirit of Truth" is to operate till all be regenerated,

till the holiness and supremacy of God are asserted. We are to believe reliantly, to repose upon God, to be patient, to work, humbly and silently, to increase the leaven of the life of God, to try to animate, to quicken some. We may indeed often feel that it is hidden, that God is hidden; but we are to pray and not to faint, to consecrate life's short day to the advancement of His kingdom, and to do this with all our mind and strength, independent of its immateriality and invisibility. It will not always be hidden: "He *shewed* us that great city! the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, having the glory of God."

Reader, are you conscious that you are increasing the kingdom? do you know any who have been added thereto by your means? or are you, noiselessly it may be, interrupting it? yourself still a part of the dead, unquickened lump. "Purge out then the old leaven that ye may be a new lump."

"The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and sowed in his field; which indeed is the least of all seeds: but when it is grown, it is the greatest among herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof." (xiii. 31.) It is impossible for those who have read the pastoral poems of the ancient classical writers, or for those who have read nature herself, not to appreciate this figurative language, so true to nature. How sweet, how happy, and how holy is the morning anthem of the feathered tribe, as they wake from sleep, as they soar from their downs

to carol in the skies! and how beautiful, too, to see return again to lodge in the branches of their natural ! And is it not beautiful, too, when the morning stars together, and all the sons of God shout for joy; when wake up from the realm of the prince of the power of air, to soar and to sing anthems of thanksgiving in the domain of grace, when they "come and lodge in the heavens thereof"? "In the mountain of the height of which will I plant it: and it shall bring forth boughs, and fruit, and be a goodly cedar: and under it shall dwell the owl of every wing; in the shadow of the branches thereof they dwell." (Ezek. xvii. 23.)

The parable of the Sower and the Seed is one strikingly to the point, when we consider what the kingdom of God is in the world's heart, and as we see it mature into life in after years, into life eternal after death. "Behold, a sower went out to sow." (Matt. xiii.) This sower is the Incarnate God of the Bible. (Ezek. x. 2, 3, 4—17; 1 Pet. i. 23.) "When sown, some seeds fell by the wayside, and the fowls came and devoured them up." Or as St. Luke writes, "The seed of the air" (viii. 5), signifying the unclean desires of the kingdom of the prince of the power of the air (Rev. ii. 2), these devoured, or the seed of life was swallowed up by them: "When any one heareth the word of the kingdom, and *understandeth it not*, then cometh the wicked one, and he snatcheth away that which was sown in his heart. This is he which received seed by the wayside." (Matt. xiii. 19.) Here

the sower, God the Eternal Spirit of truth, is not at fault. "The seed is the word of God" (Luke viii. 11); the seed is not at fault; but the Teacher, one in the Order of Christ the Sower (John xx. 21); and are there not many mothers, many ministers of the sanctuary, many teachers in our seats of learning, who teach so that their children, their hearers, and their students, collegians, do not *understand*? So that there is no seed of life, power of life, or light of life to withstand the foul seductions of the devil. He comes and catches away that which was sown: "This is he which received seed by the wayside."

"Some fell upon stony places, where they had not much earth: and forthwith they sprung up, because they had no deepness of earth: and when the sun was up, they were scorched; and because they had no root, they withered away." The explanation of this as given by Christ, both by St. Matt. xiii. 20, 21, and by St. Luke, is solemn (viii. 13), the hearer alone seems to be at fault. "He that received seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth the Word, and anon *with joy* receiveth it; yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth for a while: for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended." Or, "In time of temptation fall away." Are there not those who would receive all the sovereign gifts Heaven has to bestow *with joy*, but who live without doing one *iota* to advance the kingdom of God, their religion is self; these have not faith to sustain them, to give them prowess to rise above the surge

and billow of affliction and persecution ; they are offended, that is, appalled, dismayed, incredulous, cast down. And in temptation they fall, because the seed of the Word had fallen upon a rocky heart ; it had not nourished, given life, light, and strength to resist : “ It withered away, because it lacked moisture.”

“ And some fell among thorns ; and the thorns sprung up, and choked them.” The Preacher’s own explanation of this *verse* shows how great an observer He was of the world around Him : “ That which fell among thorns are they, which, when they have heard, go forth, and are choked with *cares* and *riches* and *pleasures* of life, and bring no fruit to perfection.” The majority of the lost are of this class ; it is the most pitiable, melancholy case of the three ; the young, the amiable, the affectionate, the fervent, the delightful, are all swallowed up here : Jesus, beholding the rich man, loved him. *Oh, young Christian !* lovely as an angel, beware ! lest you bring no fruit to perfection.

“ But others fell into good ground, and brought forth fruit, some an hundredfold, some sixtyfold, some thirtyfold.” *Oh, God of all grace,* grant that this precious seed of thy blessed Word, of the incorruptible word which liveth, may fall into good ground ; and do thou moisten it with the dew of thy Spirit ; break up the fallow ground ; do thou thyself be our Teacher till it shall yield thee an hundredfold.

“ He that received seed into the good ground is he that heareth the word, and *understandeth* it.” Or as given by

St. Luke, "That on the good ground are they, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, *keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience.*" Patience is an attribute of heaven, and it is a rare quality of the believer's mind. There are mines of experimental truths in Scripture which require experience in Divine teaching, in affliction, in persecution, in trial, in temptation to understand; but the good ground will not fail here, the heart will yield, open to teaching, learn to understand, "Bring forth fruit with patience; ye have need of patience." "Who hath ears to hear, let him hear."

The winding-up of this parable is that remarkable conversation of Christ with his disciples upon the subject of parables, which I have gone through at the beginning of this chapter upon parables, from Mark iv. 11, 12. If it be read carefully, it will be seen that He himself gave precisely the interpretation of the conversation which we have gathered from St. Mark's less defined relation of it. Speaking of the Jewish Church, He said, "Therefore speak I to them in parables," because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not; neither do they understand. In them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand: and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive: For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes *they have* closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them." (Matt. xiii. 12, 13—15.)

Here is the reason given why judicial blindness and death had overtaken that Church, "Their eyes they have closed." Mark related the fact, but omitted the why of the Divine judgment.

The parable of the good seed and the tares is another with this of the Sower and the Seed: God sowed good seed, but an enemy, the devil, came, and sowed tares among the wheat. His servants impatiently and unmercifully inquire, "Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up?" But the long suffering of God is salvation, and his care for his chosen is tender, watchful: "Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them. Let them both grow together until the harvest."

"Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field; the which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field." How forcibly does this parable strike those who "know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven," and feel the possession of it in themselves. "He hideth," is only expressive of great treasure, of the deep sense of possession. "No man knoweth saving he that receiveth it." The meaning is not, Hideth it from others, but only careful in the retention of it for themselves; happy, and satisfied in the deep, unknown possession and enjoyment of it; and the deep, boundless volume of happiness goes on to increase till, for joy thereof, we go and sell all that we have, and buy that field of heavenly treasure, and of eternal life. Buy! how do we

buy that which is the sovereign gift of heaven? It is often purchased at a very great cost, and we should always do well to sit down and count the cost, lest haply we should not be able to meet it.

“Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant-man, seeking goodly pearls: who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it.” We see here, how the Divine Teacher led his hearers upward, and onward; the first man is represented as counting the cost, and buying the field of treasure; the other impulsively in a moment selling all to buy the pearl. Oh, grasping, itinerant merchantmen of this world, seek the “one pearl of great price,” and go, and sell all, and buy it.

“Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a net, that was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind: which, when it was full, they drew to shore, and sat down and gathered the good into vessels, but cast the bad away.” Thus, we see how Christ laboured by every means in his power to set forth the true meaning of the kingdom of God to his hearers. When he had finished these parables, the people were astonished, and said, “Whence has this man this wisdom? Is not this the carpenter’s son?”

But let us look again at the true meaning of the kingdom of God, as taught by Christ. When Peter inquired of Him, “Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Till seven times? Jesus saith unto him, I

my not unto thee, Until seven times : but, Until seventy times seven."

"Therefore is the kingdom of heaven likened unto a certain king, which would take account of his servants. And when he had begun to reckon, one was brought unto him, which owed him ten thousand talents. But forasmuch as he had not to pay, his Lord commanded him to be sold, and his wife, and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made. The servant, therefore, fell down and worshipped him, saying, Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. Then the lord of that servant was moved with compassion, and loosed him, and forgave him the debt." (Matt. xviii. 21—27.) Perhaps there could be no more absolute, and perfect illustration of the kingdom of God than this generous, absolute, noble, sovereign forgiveness of the whole debt. A perfect type of the kingdom of God is here set up for our imitation. Peter as the representative of the Christian Church was his Lord's debtor : had he not had a heavy debt, which it was impossible for him to pay, and had he not been forgiven ? Doubtless, the inquiry of Peter arose from the foregoing teaching of his Master upon the subject of humility, and how to deal with offences ; (xviii. 7—17 ;) but there the point at issue differed : doubtless, a Christian name, profession, character, were at stake ; that which should be guarded by us with the greatest possible tenacity, and held most sacred by each other : if these were outraged by an offending brother, the injured party was to withdraw from such a one, leave the matter in the hand of God ; let him be to thee as a sinner, a

stranger ; but even here, the moral standard of Christ's kingdom, of sanctified conscience might not be violated. "But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you. Bless, and curse not." But in all ordinary cases we are to dwell together in holy brotherhood until seventy times seven, and in all to forgive as we have been forgiven. This was the teaching of the Great Head of the Church to Peter, the representative of the human body : and then He set up a case in contrast to it, a type of the kingdom of darkness, one which seems to set forth, and to hold up to everlasting execration the black side, even of a Christian body.

"The same servant went out, and found one of his fellow-servants, which owed him an hundred pence : and he laid hands on him, and took him *by the throat*, saying, Pay me that thou owest." Hence the authoritative command of our Church, she shall not lay hands suddenly upon any man. Christ in his gracious, divine caution, in his Institution of the Church, used this very forcible language, "*Took him by the throat.*" Here great violence is expressed ; and the sin is so much the greater, because the power, authority, privilege, grace, spiritual judgment, and high favoured commission which Christ gave to her were so great ; her responsibility is in proportion to these, and an account of her stewardship must be rendered in accordance with them. We could only think of God as a partial, unjust, unequal, as an odious Being, if he could commit such power and favour to a Body as we find

the Apostolic Church, if it could be possible that d be abused, that he would make no reckoning, o account. The bare thought of a Body sheltering he respectability of an Order, beneath the gourd of ce ; (Jonah iv. 6, 7, 8 ;) and therein protected, and with impunity to commit violence at will, this repugnant to reason ; to say nothing of the calm the Eternal throne, where the Son of man sits in of His own holiness and justice. As I have said, ousness and justice is His glory ; they constitute His e, never ending, repose ; and the Church can never able and quiescent as He is, till she finds that un- pose in His presence ; that is, by attaining to the He hath himself reared, by so living in His presence fe, that she shall be changed from glory to glory, : like Him.

Interpolation of Christ in this chapter shows us, the as addressed to His Church, He set the power to her, and the awful account she would have in contrast. Let us look at both : " Verily, I say , Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound n : and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be 1 heaven." (Matt. xviii. 18.) And by St. Luke (xxii. 29), " I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my ath appointed unto me ; that ye may eat and drink ble in my kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the tribes of Israel." This is now fulfilled, and hence the sponsibility and retribution of the offending servant

in the remainder of this parable in chap. xviii. of St. Matt. But, before returning to it, glance back for a moment at the gracious revelation and stronghold of the Body, the Church, which follow the passage I have quoted from St. Luke, "*Simon, Simon*, behold Satan hath desired you : but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not." As though He had said, You are the representative of my Church, the gates of hell shall not prevail against you or her. But this does not prove that she is an *infallible* Church, that she is not subject to correction, to reckoning, to judgment ; not subject to her Lord and Master, to her Head ; let her see that she render cheerfully this subjection ; this tribute to Him as the glorified Son of the Highest.

"The same servant went out, and found one of his fellow-servants, which owed him an hundred pence : and he laid hands on him, and took him by the throat, saying, Pay me that thou owest. And his fellow-servant fell down at his feet, and besought him, saying, Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. And he would not : but went and cast him into prison, till he should pay the debt." Natural instinct, to say nothing of sanctified nature, recoils before such satanic proceedings. Nothing is more to be feared than intemperate disposition in power ; but intrusted with spiritual power it must be ruinous to souls.

"So when his fellow-servants saw what was done, they were very sorry, and came and told unto their Lord all that was done." This is beautifully suggestive of the prayers of saints presented to God for the injured and the oppressed ; not one such prayer can remain unanswered, as we shall see

in the sequel of this parable. But are there not those who can join hand in hand with the wicked, join in the condemnation of the innocent, and the injured, without reason, and without proof of wrong, or wishing justice to be done? Yes, there are such, but they cannot go unpunished.

“Then his lord, after he had called him, said unto him, O thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou desiredst me : shouldest not thou also have had compassion on thy fellow-servant, even as I had pity on thee? And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, until he should pay all that was due unto him. So, likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses.”

Let us again remember here, that this parable was preached to Peter, the representative of the Christian priesthood; that the Jewish Church was then about to be expelled, or, in other language, about to be delivered to the tormentors, for pride, arrogance, and unfaithfulness; and, therefore, the voice to the Order was a caution for the future, lest a like judgment of condemnation should fall upon it. There is another great lesson we have to learn here, *never* to revenge ourselves, *never* to take retribution into our own hands. “Dearly beloved, revenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. Therefore, if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome of evil, but over-

come evil with good. (Rom. xii. Read 1 Cor. vii. the first eight verses.) Why do ye not rather suffer wrong? Why do ye not rather suffer yourselves to be defrauded?" The teaching of St. Peter, later, was of the same lofty, moral standard, "This is thankworthy, if a man for *conscience toward God* endure grief, suffering wrongfully. If, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God." (1 Pet. ii. 19—24.) The third chapter is of the same high attainment in the divine life, "Be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous: not rendering evil for good, or railing for railing: but contrariwise blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, *that ye should inherit a blessing.*" This is the true nature of the Kingdom of God. Oh, then why not a more determined struggle to cast away the leaven of malice, a more determined struggle for victory over self, and to help forward the glorious restoration. I have seen one, and two, and three, and four taken by the throat, and the wicked servant still sheltered in the respectability of his Order, and in the talents given him of God for His service. It is impossible God can suffer such abuse of divine prerogative.

The parable of the Labourers in the Vineyard is a very remarkable one, as showing that it is the greatest honour God can bestow upon a servant,—to employ him in His service, that He is debtor to no man, that we are all unprofitable servants; to be counted worthy to serve, worthy to fight, and worthy to suffer for His name's sake, is the greatest honour He can bestow; and He will ever rebuke those who lay any

reward, although they may have been in His vine-
 on the rising to the setting sun of life's short day. It
 d's free grace that they have been there at all. "Is
 e evil, because I am good?" "Who *maketh* thee to
 And what hast thou that thou didst not receive?
 thou didst receive, why dost thou glory, as if thou
 t received it?" (1 Cor. iv. 7.) "So the last shall be
 l the first last: for many be called, but few chosen."
 x. 1—16.)

kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king, which
 marriage for his son, and sent forth his servants to
 that were bidden to the wedding: and they would
 ." (Ib. xxii. 2, 3.) This may refer to the ante-
 Church, to the messengers of good tidings sent to
 el was a priest to God, Enoch was a burning and a
 ight, and Noah a *preacher of righteousness*. "Again,
 forth other servants, saying, Tell them which are
 behold, I have prepared my dinner: my oxen and my
 re killed, and all things are ready: come unto the
 . But they made light of it, and went their ways,
 s farm, another to his merchandise." Was not this
 h Church? Her pale, her holy precinct was intended
 n the world, as much as it is the function of the
 . Church to do so: "Do according to all that the
 calleth to thee for; that all people of the earth may
 y name, and fear thee, as doth thy people Israel."
 1. vi. 33.) But did not the mass of the people make

light of it? The little true Church was a burning and a shining light in Egypt, in Sodom, in Babylon; but her Divine call was rejected,—“they made light of it.”

“And the remnant took his servants, and entreated them spitefully, and slew them.” This violence was not only from without her pale, but within it; her rebellion from her Sovereign King, and her satanic civil wars; her murder of the prophets and destruction of her own altars were just this. “When the king heard thereof he was wroth: and he sent forth his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city.” This preaching was to the Sadducees and Pharisees, and it was prophetic of the destruction of Jerusalem, more fully declared in the twenty-fourth chapter: “When the chief priests and Pharisees heard his parables, they perceived that he spake of them.” (Matt. xxi. 45.)

“Then saith he to his servants, The wedding is ready, but they which were bidden were not worthy. Go ye therefore into the highways, and as many as ye shall find, bid to the marriage. So those servants went into the highways, and gathered together all as many as they found, both bad and good: and the wedding was furnished with guests.” This was the Christian Church, still prophetically spoken; and I think it a most gracious, Divine acknowledgment of the service of the faithful,—of the priesthood of this dispensation. As we look back at the progress of Christianity in the early Church,—carried, rooted deeply in three-quarters of the globe, even by the Apostles; and as I look at the purity of our Church Service,

leaving out some later additions of our Prayer-book, some few later corruptions ; I say, as I look at the purity of that service, at the divine, scriptural, logical reasoning,—at its sound creed, deep doctrines, fervent spirit, urgent inculcation of precept, and deeply studied order of arrangement, I do discover God in it ; and as I trace on the history of the true Church downward,—the Reformation, the Puritan throng, who soared even above those corruptions, I understand our Saviour's gracious words : "Those servants went into the highways, and gathered together all as many as they found, both bad and good : and the wedding was furnished with guests." The Lord's table upon earth and in heaven, *is now* furnished with guests, with trophies of the Church's labour ; let her go on in this her might, with this most gracious and encouraging foresight of her Lord,—with this crown of His tender appreciation.

But "when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment." Christ's teaching was broad, and took in a vast circumference. He spoke of bodies. This man was not an isolated being in the world's history, nor in this Christian dispensation. Is there now no body of people in the pale of the true Church, to say nothing of the external world, who have not on a wedding garment ? In the custom of the East there could be no greater insult offered to the host of a feast, or to the royal entertainer at a feast, than to be without the appointed robe ; indeed, it could not be ; a person so offending would have

the rebel host the sceptre of justice and judgment, just as in revelation we see Him doing over dispensations as they pass away, when the rebellion of the people, and their rejection of Him have been declared. (Mark iv. 12; Matt. xiii 14, 15.) The future is present to God; and hence this sovereign fiat of pre-election and of condemnation. They could be pronounced over a world in the womb of the future as well as in the judgment-day at the last. "Many are called, but few chosen." All are called, and all might have been saved; but few accept the call, and therefore grace claims but few.

The parable of the two sons was a sermon directly to the priesthood, a rebuke to the priests and elders. They asked Christ, "By what authority doest thou these things? And who gave thee this authority? And Jesus answered and said unto them, I also will ask you one thing, which if ye tell me, I in likewise will tell you by what authority I do these things. The baptism of John, whence was it? from heaven, or of men?" They reasoned among themselves, but could only answer, "We cannot tell." I have shown you that baptism superseded the molten sea of the temple, which was for the priests to wash in; and that it typified the molten sea of "the Spirit of Truth," in which all were to wash, and be clean; the chief priests and elders of the people could not understand this: "we cannot tell." Nor would Jesus tell them by what hidden wisdom and authority He said and did those things.

"But what think ye? A certain man had two sons; and he came to the first, and said, Son, go work to-day in my vineyard. He answered and said, I will not: but afterward

he repented, and went. And he came to the second, and said likewise. And he answered and said, I go, sir: and went not. Whether of them twain did the will of his father? They say unto him, The first." How extraordinary that the force of this parable could be perceived, readily acknowledged, and not applied. "I go, sir," tells us of the flippant comportment of the body, of "the light and treacherous" dispositions of those intrusted with holy things. Christ laboured to make them understand the momentous importance of their commissions, and to point out to them in contrast their trifling and pharisaical pride. Let every servant intrusted with his Master's commission well pause when he says, "I go, sir." There are too many triflers, deserters, traitors in His service. "Jesus saith unto them, Verily, I say unto you, that the publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you."

The regeneration of the Church, the expulsion of the Jewish, and the institution of the Christian Church, were subjects which deeply occupied the mind of Christ; and thus it was that matter of this sort crowded upon His mind, and formed so great a portion of His teaching. He knew the past of the one and the future of the other; to Him was lucid what to them sometimes seemed vaguely expressed. The two parables of the unjust steward, and of the rich man and Lazarus, are precisely to this point (Luke xvi.); but I must first notice the parables of the fifteenth chapter; their bearing, too, is entirely to this point.

"Then drew near unto him all the publicans and sinners

for to hear him ; And the Pharisees and Scribes murmured, saying, This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them." We have seen, in the parable of the two sons, this body of the priesthood rebuked for not doing the commission whereunto they were sent ; and here, they not only refuse to go and do the work of God themselves ; but they are ready to fall upon and kill the Sent One, because He is about His Father's business. This He Himself fully set forth and explained in the parable of the householder who planted a vineyard ; it was preached immediately after that of the two sons. (Matt. xxi. 33.) "Last of all he sent unto them his son, saying, They will reverence my son. But when the husbandmen saw the son, they said among themselves, This is the heir ; come, let us kill him, and let us seize upon his inheritance. And they caught him, and cast him out of the vineyard, and slew him." Was not this, the beast (Rev. xiii.) ? the man of sin (2 Thess. ii.) ? for the priesthood to arrogate to themselves the supremacy, the headship of the Church, to arrogate to themselves the favour of heaven without doing the will of our Father which is in heaven, is the beast. As Christ Himself added in this parable, it is the stumbling-stone of the body in all ages. (Matt. xxi. 41—43.) Thus we see in this parable of the lost sheep (Luke xvi.), the people ready to hear, to receive Christ, but the pharisees offended at His doctrine, at His mission of reconciliation and of peace ; although, as I have before shown you from the 2 Chron. vi. 32, 33 that their mission was as much to set

forth a free salvation to the world as was His; but they were too proud and selfish, uncharitable, self-seeking, and self-glorifying to do this. "Let us kill him, and seize on his inheritance."

Then He spake to them the parable of the lost sheep, which was indeed divinely calculated to instruct their poor misguided understandings, to correct their worldly policy. The good Shepherd is represented as leaving the ninety and nine, and going after that which was lost; and, when he had found it rejoicing over it more than over those which went not astray: "I say *unto you*, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance." One would have thought this Divine leniency and forbearance, this winning grace of the Spirit, would have subdued the pharisaical pride and rancour, and have made way in their hearts for the reception of the glorious Gospel of a free salvation; for this was what the parable was intended to teach them; the Preacher would set forth the dignity and glory of His kingdom by showing them that its foundation and throne were holiness, compassion, and sovereign love; and so He said, there is more joy in heaven when that glory is manifested to the world, to all worlds, by the conversion of sinners, than there is over ninety and nine just persons, who need no repentance; but He did not say that such persons could be found, for He was at the time speaking to those whom He called scribes, pharisees, hypocrites, fools, blind, blind guides,

leaders of the blind, and against whom He pronounced the awful malediction, Woe, woe, woe. (Matt. xxiii.) The proposition at issue was a negative one. There would be joy in heaven over one sinner, because the glory of Christ's work and satisfactory death would be thereby manifested; but there could be none there over the ninety and nine just persons, who need no repentance, because, could they be found, the fact would sap redemption's base, and render null and void His work and atoning death; therefore, we must read the negative of the parable as well as the great doctrinal truth set forth.

In the parable of the piece of silver, the Divine Teacher immediately taught again the glorious nature of His kingdom, employing a like figure; but in explaining His meaning, He left out the negative of His former illustration: "Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth." In logic, two negatives make an affirmative, and "the Teacher come from God" was too sound a logician to reason unsoundly, to commit Himself to those who watched His words, that they might entangle Him in His talk.

But this teaching may have another meaning. Angels throughout the Apocalypse, and in many places both in the Old Testament and in the New, simply means, a minister of God's Word, a duplex being, one filled with the Spirit of God, doing His will. Christ said, their angels, or the indwelling Spirit, always beholds the face of His Father which

is in heaven. Would not such an one rejoice over a sinner when he repented? Would not this be "joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth." Christ would make known to the pharisees that they were not of this glorious order when they murmured because He received sinners. He wished to convince them that they were of a counterfeit order, not duplex; neither a body, which need no repentance.

The following parables set the point at rest. The younger son, in the parable of the prodigal son, represented the Jewish Church, perhaps called the younger from the circumstance of the Christian Church being called out of the Gentile, and therefore was the elder brother, as the commission of the Antediluvian Church was to have brought all within her pale. I do not deny that this parable was a beautiful figure of every penitent, returning sinner; but to deny Christ as a prophet, would be to the human family to incur immense loss. While we read individual history, we must read, too, that of the body.

This prodigal took his journey into a *far country*, and there wasted his substance in riotous living. This tells us how very far the poor Jew has wandered from his God. As we glance back at his history from the time of Rehoboam, we see this long journey of departure. "And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land; and he began to be in want." His all was expended when expelled by Christ, when cut off from Him. As we read of the cruel mocking, afflic-

tion, persecution, and destitution which the Jews suffered in the early part of this dispensation, we understand the expressions, "A mighty famine. And he *began* to be in want."

"And he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country; and he sent him into his fields to feed swine." They have thus allied themselves with the world in commerce, even to money-getting and money-lending, in their direst dregs. "To feed swine," very aptly describes the very low estate of commercial traffic to which they have fallen. "He would fain have *filled his belly* with the husks that the swine did eat: and no man gave unto him." Here the very lowest state of degradation and spiritual destitution are expressed. Animal life in its lowest estate is all that we gather; a being ravenous after the refuse of earth, a money worshipper, a Demas. And yet some Christian expositors of the Word of God tell us that the untold wealth they have amassed, their coffers full of gold, are now ready to take them back to the Holy City, to build again her ancient bulwarks. The Prophet Christ did not tell us so; He saw them journeying on into a *far country*, feeding swine, filling their belly with the very refuse of the swine's portion. This picture is just, for I do not think that either the Church or the world has yet duly considered the enormity of the crime, of *the Church* crucifying her Redeemer, her Head, the Holy One. She rejected the glory of the Holy One, and filled her belly with the glory which the swine do eat,—with hell. The devil might have done this in the beast; it was

t that one man should die for the people ; but that
ld so gain the mastery over God's chosen people
le had endowed with grace and life, must for ever
rebuke in the annals of time. "He came unto his
d his own received him not." "The voice of thy
s blood crieth unto me from the ground." This is the
planation of the "journey into a far country." The
of the God-man is the distance, the gulf of condem-
and of hell, from which they have to rise. From such
they have to take a long journey back before they can
red as a people. See them now. (Rev. xi. 7—10 ;
xxvii. 2, 3.)

when he came to himself, he said, How many hired
s of my father's have bread enough and to spare,
perish with hunger!" These servants are the
an Ministry; it is very remarkable that the first
t should be to ally themselves with them; they have
ead of life, enough, and to spare. (Ezek. xxxvii. 17,
.) He then takes courage, and goes to his Father,
ly as a servant; re-adoption as a son seemed too great
umption. "But when he was yet a great way off, his
saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his
and kissed him." It is true he was still a great way
en this expression of compassion and of love burst
he father's heart; but he was then eating the bread of
ildren, of the hired servants of his father, and not filling
lly with the husks that the swine did eat. The father
voted the first advance, ran, and fell on his neck,

and embraced him. The confession of sin is genuine, deep-felt; but the father waived the humiliation, and graciously, delicately commanded in its stead, "Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet." I do not think this robe refers more to the robe of Christ's righteousness than it does to the robe of priestly office, which is yet to be restored. (Jer. xiii. 6; Rev. xvi. 12; ix. 14.) The four angels here seen loosed from the Euphrates are the Jewish priesthood, the same as seen in the 14th chapter, preaching the everlasting Gospel; the same sealed tribes as seen in the seventh chapter. The same "exceeding great army," as seen by Ezek. xxxvii. 10; and hence I think the best robe of the prodigal. Not a hired servant, but an *angel* (Rev. xiv.), a son who had repented, and went to do his father's will.

The ring signified, restored to covenant engagement. "The Spirit and the bride say, Come." (Gen. xli. 42; Esth. iii. 10, 12; viii. 8, 10.)

The fatted calf and the rejoicing are only expressive of the rich grace God has in store when His ancient people shall arise and return to Him. "For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found." See this dead body in Ezek. xxxvii. and in Rev. xi.; and see, too, its miraculous resurrection in the same chapters.

The anger of the brother is very difficult to understand, how, in that advanced state of the Christian Church, she should be angry at God's abundant favour bestowed upon the sister kingdom; she is represented as in the field of

labour. "As he came and drew nigh to the house," may refer to the great glory of the house of David, and of the Divine glory of the Temple in which she shall arise (Rev. xi. 11, 12); and the momentary anger shows us how our degenerate nature will cling to us, till it shall be at last wholly eradicated, till she put on for ever her final restitution robe. Or the jealous anger so faithfully set forth might still be a sermon to the Pharisees and Scribes, who had so wickedly murmured because Christ received sinners. But be this as it may, the tenderness and conciliatory bearing of our heavenly Father are strongly expressed, "Therefore came his father out, and entreated him." "Thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine." And then the why and the wherefore of the rejoicing is *again* repeated: "For this thy brother was dead, and is alive again; and was lost, and is found." Oh, if there be this rejoicing in heaven over sinners born again, and God Himself be the soul, centre, and crowning of it, let there too be "joy in the presence of the *angels of God* over one sinner that repenteth."

The Divine Teacher would not let so awfully an important subject rest there; souls were at stake; and thus it is that we find Him immediately renewing it with His disciples. (Luke xvi.) The last three parables had been preached to the publicans and sinners; to the Scribes and Pharisees; how divinely and graciously were they adapted to all.

"And he said *also* unto his disciples, There was a certain rich man which had a steward; and the same was accused

unto him that he had wasted his goods. And he called him, and said unto him, How is it that I hear this of thee? give an account of thy stewardship; for thou mayest be no longer steward." This steward was the Jewish Church: she had wasted the true riches committed to her, and she was then about to be called upon to give an account of her stewardship. To me it is a striking sight to see the vigilant, untiring care of God for His Church,—“Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard that the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary?” (Isa. xl. 28.) If we would see this, track her light from Eden across the antediluvian world; from Ararat (Gen. viii. 20, 21; xii. 7, 8) across the Jewish dispensation to the destruction of Jerusalem: from her noble re-institution by her Head across the Christian dispensation to the present day; and then listen to the admonitory, prophetic voices of these parables.

“Then the steward said within himself, What shall I do? for my lord taketh away from me the stewardship: I cannot dig; to beg I am ashamed. I am resolved what to do, that, when I am put out of the stewardship, they may receive me into their houses. So he called every one of his lord's debtors unto him, and said unto the first, How much owest thou unto my lord? And he said, An hundred measures of oil. And he said unto him, Take thy bill, and sit down quickly, and write fifty. Then said he to another, And how much owest thou? And he said, An hundred measures of wheat. And he said unto him, Take thy bill, and write fourscore.

And the lord commended the unjust steward, because he had done wisely: for the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light. And I say unto *you*, *Make to yourselves* friends of the mammon of unrighteousness; that, when *ye fail*, they may receive you into everlasting habitations." This would be one of the most difficult parables of our Lord's ministry if it were not that we can compass all the surrounding circumstances, and now bring together all which the foreseeing Prophet then saw; all which the One true Witness in "the seven candlesticks," or Churches, always scans. The Jewish Church had then made a compromise with the Roman power, with the fourth beast of Daniel, with the Antichrist of the remaining part of the Church's history during time, with her "Lord's debtors." "We have no king but Cæsar." Christ did not commend her for this, for He knew that it was that enemy who was to deal her deathblow. (Matt. xxiv. 6, 7, 34—45.) He knew the future calamities that would overtake her; He knew her melancholy future; * the compassionate Brother of the human family took, therefore, the side of worldly policy, and simply said, to mitigate that future affliction which lies before you, Cultivate now the friendship of those to whom you have allied—surrendered yourselves, to avert as much as possible deadly hatred, cruel mocking, and death. He foresaw that she should be sent to feed swine, to fill her belly with the husks that the

* In proof of this, see *only*, "A Pilgrimage to the Land of my Fathers," by Moses Margoliouth.

swine did eat, and that no man would give unto her. And was not this advice compassionate foresight, wise ;—and not only wise, but was not the caution Godlike; when He knew that the Church was then about to deliver Him to that same power to be crucified? Seventy years afterwards she refused to pay the usual *tribute* to the Romans, and this it was which brought about the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus; the temple was burnt, and the ground ploughed, not one stone being left upon another. Would it not have been better for her if she had continued the compromise with her lord's debtors— if she had adopted the worldly sagacity with which she started—than to renounce it when it was too late? One depth leads to another, sin destroys both body and soul in hell. It would have been true wisdom in her not to have made any compromise with her lord's debtors; but to have been loyal and faithful to her own King and master, and then she would not have been put out of her stewardship. I think it is most remarkable, as though He foresaw that this tribute money would be the occasion of that black, future page of history. He wrought a miracle, to pay that tribute for His disciples and for himself. "Notwithstanding, lest we should offend them." (Matt. xvii. 24, 27.) And when even His enemies, the Pharisees, their disciples with the Herodians, would have ensnared Him by that means, He nobly, ingenuously, and plainly taught them what was their safest and wisest course to pursue upon the subject: "Whose is this image and superscription? They say unto him, Cæsar's.

Then saith he unto them, Render therefore unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's; and unto God the things which are God's." (Matt. xxii. 16, 18, 20, 21.) Did not here the lord commend the unjust steward? And He only pursued the same teaching of temporal policy when He added, "I say unto *you*, Make to *yourselves* friends of the mammon of unrighteousness, that when *ye fail*, they may receive you into everlasting habitations."

The ground I stand upon is most awful! Oh, my God, by one voice tell me if this voice be thine!

Has the Christian Church made no compromise with her Lord's debtors? Is not the voice audible, clamorous, even as it was then: "We will have no king but Cæsar?" Is not the voice now murmuring in our midst, struggling to be heard,—“If my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight?” Has not this voice been murmuring throughout this dispensation,—claimed audience,—striven to be listened to? Had the kingdom of God in every heart been made a sacred thing, made much of, recognised by the Church, have been made supreme, it would now have been supreme in the world; this has not been so, it is not so now,—it holds the very lowest estimation in the minds of men that it can possibly hold: and why? Because the Church has not fought meekly, believingly, unceasingly, vigorously, with strong crying and tears, to make it supreme. The glory of Cæsar, the glory of the prince of this world, still eclipses the kingdom of God. Well, then, the Church, as

fallible, must receive correction; but if she be wise in her generation, she will make friends with all nations; that when her self-conceived infallibility *fails*, they may receive her into everlasting habitations: which simply means, refuge to the end of time. Now, the kingdom of God is strong enough in the hearts of men in the world; Truth is strong enough to go forth and stand upon her own base; and God can put upon the *true* Church no greater honour and glory than to strip her of the tinsel of time, to send her forth in her own glorious self to lighten the world. In faith she may ride over the billow,—control, and conquer the surge. Moral and spiritual laws do control physical nature (Isa. xl. 30, 31); and if she be obedient and triumphant in these, her terrene estate will be universally established, just as Joshua and Caleb entered Canaan by obedience and faith. “Faith wrought with works, and by works was faith made perfect.” Even physical strength will be given equal to the conflict.

The sequel of this parable is remarkable. We have seen the true Church make a compromise with Antichrist, both of temporal and spiritual things; and this is the key to the solution of the problem, “He that is faithful in that which is least, is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least, is unjust also in much.” As I have said, we have been unfaithful both in the little and the much. “If therefore you have not been faithful in the unrighteous *mammon*, if you have surrendered the things which are temporal to Cæsar, who will commit to your trust the true?” What does this mean?

Then saith he unto them, Render therefore unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's; and unto God the things which are God's." (Matt. xxii. 16, 18, 20, 21.) Did not here the lord commend the unjust steward? And He only pursued the same teaching of temporal policy when He added, "I say unto *you*, Make to *yourselves* friends of the mammon of unrighteousness, that when *ye fail*, they may receive you into everlasting habitations."

The ground I stand upon is most awful! Oh, my God, by one voice tell me if this voice be thine!

Has the Christian Church made no compromise with her Lord's debtors? Is not the voice audible, clamorous, even as it was then: "We will have no king but Cæsar?" Is not the voice now murmuring in our midst, struggling to be heard,—“If my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight?” Has not this voice been murmuring throughout this dispensation,—claimed audience,—striven to be listened to? Had the kingdom of God in every heart been made a sacred thing, made much of, recognised by the Church, have been made supreme, it would now have been supreme in the world; this has not been so, it is not so now,—it holds the very lowest estimation in the minds of men that it can possibly hold: and why? Because the Church has not fought meekly, believingly, unceasingly, vigorously, with strong crying and tears, to make it supreme. The glory of Cæsar, the glory of the prince of this world, still eclipses the kingdom of God. Well, then, the Church, as

Before leaving this parable, let us remember again that the Christian Church was the pupil taught, and that the application of the subject was strictly addressed to her: "When *ye* fail." Has she been faithful in the little or the much, to "the True," or has she not? And is she not serving God and mammon? God and Cæsar? That which He so plainly taught her, she could not do: "Fire shall try every man's work, of what sort it is. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself *shall be* saved; yet so as by fire." This is the very purification she is about to undergo—not to be destroyed, but to be dispersed; she is now to lengthen her cords and strengthen her stakes, till the whole earth be one Zion,—Jerusalem a quiet habitation, a tabernacle that shall not be taken down, nor one of the stakes thereof removed, nor the cords thereof be broken. (Isa. liv. 2; xxxiii. 20.)

There is not now to be another re-institution of the Christian Church, but she is to go forth a scattered people all over the world, into all nations and kingdoms, into the everlasting habitations of the unjust; not a dead body as the Jews, but life to quicken the dead, a burning and shining light, to lighten the whole earth. It was of this doctrine of the continuity of the life of the Church, that Solomon could write of the Temple, which was a type of her, "I have built an house of habitation for thee, and a place of thy dwelling for ever." (2 Chron. vi. 2.) She may dwell both amongst the unjust, and in Christ. It is but the external fabric that is to be pulled down; *sin*, trifling, compromise, unfaithfulness, which are to be consumed. I *am sure* there are giants

within, who will triumph over the fire and the sword ; but I know, also, there are those who will say, " Who can stand before the children of Anak ? We were in our own sight as grasshoppers, and so we were in their sight." But listen to the holy oracle, which is the voice of the incarnate God to the Church : " Understand therefore this day, that the Lord thy God is he which goeth over before thee." (Deut. ix. 2, 3 ; Num. xiii. 32, 33.) " The Lord will go before you ; and the God of Israel will be your rereward. The *glory* of the Lord shall be thy rereward." (Isa. lii. 12 ; lviii. 8.)

We read after this parable, " The Pharisees, *also*, who were covetous, heard all these things : and they derided him. And he said unto them, Ye are they which justify yourselves before men ; but God knoweth your hearts : for that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God." And then the Divine Teacher, " the Prophet," went on to instruct both His disciples and the double-minded Pharisees, by one of the most awful sermons preached in the whole course of His ministry, the parable of the Rich Glutton and Lazarus the beggar. (Luke xvi. 19.)

You will observe it commences with the same words as the last parable, that of the Unjust Steward.

" There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day." This rich man was the Jewish priesthood, those whom Christ had been reproving for covetousness, hypocrisy, and a pre-

sumptuous, blind justification of themselves before men. He would open to them what God saw in their hearts. The purple robe and the fine linen were the robes of the spiritual priesthood of the order of Melchisedec, still assumed, although they had really revolted from His throne and government.

"And there was a certain beggar, named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores." Lazarus represents here the whole body of our lost race, the laity as distinct from the priesthood. Sores signify sin. (Levit. xiii. 45, 46; 2 Chron. vi. 29—36.) And if we would see sin as God sees it, as He searches it out, and if we would know the meaning of these passages in their absolute sense, "The soul that sinneth it shall die" (Ezek. xviii. 4—20; Gal. iii. 10), let us give good heed to this most awful parable as we proceed.

"And desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table: moreover the dogs came and licked his sores." Dogs here signify the unclean Pharisees; as a dog was an unclean animal under the law, so they were unclean, unsanctified by the Spirit of Truth; they made a gain of sores; licked the foul leprosy for gain. "His watchmen are blind: they are all ignorant, they are all dumb dogs, they cannot bark; sleeping, lying down, loving to slumber. Yea, they are greedy dogs, which can never have enough; and they are shepherds that cannot understand: they all look to their own way, every one for his gain." (Isa. lvi. 10, 11.) Lazarus desired only the crumbs of the bread

of life which fell from the rich man's table, but they were denied him.

"And it came to pass that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom : the rich man also died, and was buried ; and in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue ; for I am tormented in this flame." That the literal rendering of this, the meaning which lies upon the surface, is to be the first accepted there can be no doubt ; the priesthood of that generation died, and they had to meet the poor beggars at the bar of God, from whom they had withheld the gospel message ; but the remainder of the parable proves that the whole admits of another rendering. The rich man in hell represents the Jewish Church in her now expelled, dead state, on earth and in hell. (Ezek. xlvii. ; Rev. xi.) "Father Abraham," from that abyss always strikes me as the consummation of Pharisaical delusion : John had tried to dispel it : "Think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our Father : for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham." (Matt. iii. 9.) Christ tried to break the heretical chain, to dispel the satanic dream : "If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham." (John viii. 39.) Yet, in hell the delusion was not dispelled. "Father Abraham !" The worm, the torment, and the fire

there could not teach, Abraham could not give one drop of the water of life to cool his tongue, nor could he have mercy when the rich man called for it. The poor beggar, who had lain at his gate, might not be sent for a drop of the water of life he had so scornfully refused to him. "Between me and you there is a great gulf fixed." This is the gulf of unpardoned sin. "Depart, ye *cursed*." "*Cursed* is every one which continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them." Cursed of God ! This is hell. Oh, let us go to Him while the gulf between earth and heaven is bridged by a glorious Mediation. (Rev. x. 2.)

"Then he said, I pray thee, therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house : For I have *five* brethren ; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment." The teaching of these two verses is indeed of God. We have seen the Jewish Church, or these proud Pharisees of that Church, had mistaken Abraham for God ; they had made him a traditionary parent, instead of rendering to their Father which was in heaven the filial love and obedience of children : and we have seen that hell itself could not dispel the illusion, could not set them right. "He cried and said, *Father* Abraham, have mercy on me. I pray thee, therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my *father's house*." What obscurity, what blindness ! "Blind leaders of the blind." What death ! He had taken refuge in the house of Abraham, in the *Church* instead of in God, whom

the Church is appointed to set forth ; and so satanic was the delusion, that *then*, the divine preaching must be adapted to his lost condition. "The beggar died, and was carried by the angels into *Abraham's* bosom." I must here digress for a moment from my subject, to say, let us beware how we reject the historic types of the Old Testament because of their debased metaphor, suited, many of them, to the capacity of the polluted age in which, and for which, they were written : when here, Christ himself inverts order, and descends to the language of hell—*Abraham's* bosom !

How strange the request of the lost man, or body of people ! "Send to my father's house : for I have *five* brethren, lest they also come into this place of torment." I do not think this was love in that bosom,—love is extinct in hell ; nor do I think it was light struggling with darkness ; but fear of greater torment when succeeding dynasties should come there and say, If you had not been proud, covetous, heretical, we should not have followed in your steps into this place.

Now, are there none who are asleep in the bosom of their mother Church, instead of at rest, saved, safe in their heavenly Father's house ? It sounds so poetical, so natural, so congenial to the human understanding, "carried by the angels into *Abraham's* bosom ;" but I am sure to have found salvation *in glory* ; the beggar full of sores must have soared, ascended higher than that, even to the bosom of "The Highest."

"*Abraham* saith unto him, They have *Moses* and the

prophets ; let them hear them." Here the true commission of the Church is beautifully and truly set forth. Let her ever faithfully say, both to her brethren in the heavenly calling and to the people,—“They have Moses and the prophets ; let them hear them.” The Jewish Church in hell did not know this her commission ; did not even believe in Moses and the prophets at all. “Had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me.” (John v. 47.) “He said, *Nay*, father Abraham : but if one went from the dead, they will repent.” This was the utter repudiation of revelation, but not one iota more so than that which dwells in the bosom of the Church in our own day, and is openly and most impiously expressed by our teachers.

“If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead.” The priesthood, the Church of this dispensation, have had both Moses and the prophets, and *One risen* from the *dead*. And the Jewish Church has been a dead body, a ghostly spectre about their path, to tell them of the torment into which she is fallen. (Rev. xi. 8, 9, 11.) But what an absolute and noble stand was this for the Divine Author of revelation to take for it. No voices from the dead, no signs and wonders, no fire from heaven may fall to devour His enemies ; but the holy oracle remains, and those who will not believe it *are* numbered with the dead, and, like the man of this parable, just passing to “this place of torment.” See its descent, Rev. xi. 5, 6.

But I have still further to notice one more voice of this man sent unto us from the dead : “I have *five brethren*.”

What does it mean? I leave it for the incarnate God of the Bible to explain;—not for newspapers, not for our advanced state of science, or even for Christianity, but for God to explain. Without the Apocalypse, without its mystical seven, it would be impossible to understand the ministry of Him who was “the Prophet;” but with that key in our hand we may unlock these mysteries, and understand how it could be said to Peter, as the representative of the Christian Church, “This night, before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me *thrice*.” (Matt. xxvi. 34.)

Mark well, I do not say that the hell of the Jewish Church is consummated in this world; but cut off from Christ, it is begun here to be consummated hereafter. The lost in hell are one with the lost on earth. Life is a continuity, begun here; everlasting vision hereafter.

It is very remarkable that Christ should have defended and forgiven those so ignominiously condemned by the world (John viii. 4; iv. 10—26; Luke vii. 48—50): and yet *cursed* so tremendously with divine execration, and have sentenced to death, and to eternal death, those who had abused the grace of God, and been unfaithful to the stewardship committed to them. (Matt. xxiii. 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 25, 27, 29, 33.)

Then what do we gather from this, as I have said before, most awful of all our Saviour’s parables? We gather the truth that sin is the abominable thing which God hates, that it is to be rooted up,—the very shadow of it eradicated: it is

foul, deep, leprous,—wounds, bruises, and putrefying sores. “As with the people, so with the priest,”—it is not to be slurred over. Pride, covetousness, violence, unbelief, and defiance of God and His Word, are sins as deadly in His sight as murder, or those sins which the world and the Church condemn and yet commit. Christ taught absolutely that unless these were all cut off, uprooted, even as plucking out the eye and cutting off the hand, they would lead on to where the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. (Matt. xviii.) The teaching is precisely the same as this parable. When the Church shall be purged from sin, glorified with God, she will look back and say, “I know, O Lord, that thy judgments are right, and that thou in faithfulness hast afflicted me. Thy faithfulness shalt thou establish in the very heavens.” She is the agent of His power, the leaven to leaven the whole lump.

The parable of the fruitless fig-tree was entirely one to the people. They had told Christ of the blood of the Galileans shed by Pilate; when He immediately seized the opportunity to tell them that neither they, nor the eighteen on whom the tower of Siloam fell, were greater sinners than themselves; and He illustrated His meaning by this parable: “A certain man had a fig-tree planted in his vineyard; and he came and sought fruit thereon, and found none.” (Luke xiii. 6.) Notice here, this tree was *in the vineyard*, and not by the way-side. The next verse is remarkable, as showing that God’s agents are responsible for the souls of men. “Then said he

the dresser of his vineyard, Behold, these three years I seeking fruit on this fig-tree, and find none: cut it why cumbereth it the ground?" The tower of Siloam to fall, Pilate may not shed blood, but when the time of a sinner's probation is expired, the Divine mandate goes 'Cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground?' Our Lord's proposition of what the answer of the dresser of the fig-tree would be, is very expressive of the right feelings of faithful servants, "Lord, let it alone this year also, till I bring about it, and dung it: and if it bear fruit, well: and if not, then after that thou shalt cut it down." Noble command, inimitable example!

Jesus immediately followed up this teaching by healing, on Sabbath-day, the woman who had been bound with a cruel infirmity for eighteen years; perhaps to show the proper use of vineyards the use of the day *blessed*, and set apart, in which they may so heal, cultivate, and enrich souls, as that all may bear fruit well.

The cursing of the barren fig-tree (related by St. Matthew, xiii. 20-21; and St. Mark xi. 13-20) is applicable alike both to individuals and to the body of the Jewish Church, but the latter is evidently more immediately symbolized. Let us look first at the one, and then at the other.

Jesus, in His zeal for His Father's house, had made a great use of small cords, and driven out of the Temple the idle merchants of sheep and oxen, and poured out the tables of money, and overthrew their tables. (John ii. 17; Matt. xxi. 12.) Perhaps the sixty-ninth Psalm,

from the ninth verse, had fired Him with that holy zeal, that unflinching indignation ; and how would He feel too the truth and force of the words, "The reproaches of them that reproached thee are fallen upon me!" He then quoted from Isaiah (lvi. 7—11), from the remarkable chapter where the watchmen of Israel are called "blind, ignorant, dumb dogs,—greedy dogs, who can never have enough, shepherds that cannot understand : they all look to their own way, every one for his gain." As He saw this disorder lie before Him in its direst form, He drave from the Temple the rebel insurgents of His Father's throne. "My house shall be called the house of prayer ; but ye have made it a den of thieves ;" and then and there He healed the blind and the lame, to show them the lawful use of that house. (Matt. xxi. 13, 14.) "Go, stand and speak in the temple to the people all the words of this life." (Acts v. 20.) St. Matthew and St. John both relate that the Jews, the chief priests and elders, came to Him, "and said, By what authority doest thou these things? and who gave thee this authority?" His answers, as related by both, are remarkable, deep in doctrine, and both prove that which I have before said,—that the Sacred Writings were always the authority of the distinct human nature of Christ: "It is written." (Matt. xxi. 13.) And then, as we have seen, He quoted both from David and Isaiah ; and this is the key, the solution of the deep question with which He puzzled the rebels, who stood amazed at the wonderful things which He did.

"Jesus answered and said unto them, I also will ask you

one thing, which if ye tell me, I in like wise will tell you by what authority I do these things. The baptism of John, whence was it? from heaven, or of men? And they answered Jesus, and said, We cannot tell. And he said unto them, Neither tell I you by what authority I do these things." (Matt. xxi. 25—27.) That baptism had superseded the molten sea of the temple where the priests washed; they both symbolized the molten sea of "the Spirit of Truth," where, if they did not wash, they were a dead, inefficient body of men.* The pool of Bethesda typified the same; and the angel there, God's sent minister. St. John tells us Christ answered His opposers at that time by a still more forcible appeal to their dark understandings and dead consciences: "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up" (John ii. 18, 19); that is, away with your impious, profane desecration of this place, I am "the Temple of God," which it typified.

In the twenty-third of St. Matthew, we find Christ pronouncing eight most awful woes upon the whole body of Scribes, Pharisees, and hypocrites, because, He said, "Ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye neither go in, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in."

This state of that already fallen, dead Church, prepares us to understand the malediction of a holy, righteous God falling upon that barren fig-tree; the parable was as scriptural as

* The writer is aware of the frequent repetition of this truth, but it is because the teaching is so very important.

the prelude to it, and as all the teaching which surrounded it had been. (Cant. ii. 13; Hos. ix. 10; Joel i. 7—12; ii. 22.) “Seeing a fig-tree afar off having leaves, he came, if haply he might find anything thereon: and when he came to it, he found nothing but leaves; for the time of figs was not. And Jesus answered and said unto it, No man eat fruit of thee hereafter for ever. And his disciples heard.” (Mark xi. 13, 14.) St. Matthew says, as he came to the fig-tree, “He hungered.” (xxi. 19.)

Considerable difficulty has arisen in the minds of expositors upon this parable. It was at the time of the Passover when Christ came to this fig-tree (John ii. 13), which was in March, the time of the early figs was in July and August; and of the later, September and October; how then could he expect to find fruit; or how could he curse a tree for that which was not natural?

The answer is perfectly plain. He had meat to eat; He did not crave the food which perisheth: there would have been no meaning in God, the Redeemer of the world cursing a poor fig tree: that for itself could receive neither cursing or blessing; He himself explained that this was not His meaning, “The time of figs was not.” But the desolation of Israel lay around Him; He saw souls lost because there was no knowledge of “The Tree of Life” to nourish them; He came to the barren tree, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord; and the thing signified in the parable was the one dominant in His mind; and by a powerful sermon the malediction of God was

one thing, which if ye tell me, I in like wise will tell you by what authority I do these things. The baptism of John, whence was it? from heaven, or of men? And they answered Jesus, and said, We cannot tell. And he said unto them, Neither tell I you by what authority I do these things." (Matt. xxi. 25—27.) That baptism had superseded the molten sea of the temple where the priests washed; they both symbolized the molten sea of "the Spirit of Truth," where, if they did not wash, they were a dead, inefficient body of men.* The pool of Bethesda typified the same; and the angel there, God's sent minister. St. John tells us Christ answered His opposers at that time by a still more forcible appeal to their dark understandings and dead consciences: "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up" (John ii. 18, 19); that is, away with your impious, profane desecration of this place, I am "the Temple of God," which it typified.

In the twenty-third of St. Matthew, we find Christ pronouncing eight most awful woes upon the whole body of scribes, Pharisees, and hypocrites, because, He said, "Ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye neither go in, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in."

This state of that already fallen, dead Church, prepares us to understand the malediction of a holy, righteous God falling upon that barren fig-tree; the parable was as scriptural as

* The writer is aware of the frequent repetition of this truth, but it is because the teaching is so very important.

gathered in, in the 14th chapter, we are sure this was the mind of the Spirit.

But there are other striking features in the parable. "His disciples heard;" was it not a sermon to them also? to the Christian Church? "These *three* years I come seeking fruit on this fig-tree, and find none: cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground?" (Luke xiii. 7.) The dresser, even God himself, has dug about it, and cultivated it; and what is her fruit at the end of the *third* round of time?

"*In the morning*, as they passed by, they saw the fig-tree dried up from the roots. And *Peter* calling to remembrance, saith unto Him, Master, behold the fig-tree which thou cursedst is withered away." (Mark xi. 21.) What was the meaning of that emphatic notification? "His disciples heard." Why was the cursed object once more brought before their notice—forced upon their observation? "Peter calling to remembrance." Did this portend to the representatives of the Christian Church a like wrathful sentence from heaven for unfaithfulness? "When the *even* was come," is the even of her day come? "*In the morning* as they passed by, they saw the fig-tree dried up from the roots." St. Paul's prophecy upon the subject is very striking. (Rom. xi. 18—21.) Christ's answer to Peter, when he begged Him to behold the cursed, withered stock, is remarkable: "*Have faith in God*. For verily I say unto you, That whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that

things which he saith shall come to pass; he shall have oever he saith. Therefore I say unto you, What things ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive, and all have." (Mark xi. 23.) The whole curse seems turned blessing, to a sermon of encouragement; believe that no other shall rise again, and he shall rise again; believe the mountain of sin shall fall, and it shall fall; believe the whole body of the Antichristian power shall fall, be wither away as you have seen this fig-tree dried up to the roots, and it shall be done, "Have faith in God."

At the beginning of this dispensation did, indeed, look darkness itself; prophecy was clothed in parable, that no might alarm, no cloud obscure the bright vision of the truth; that nothing might impede the Church in pressing on her journey; but now that she has failed, she must know alike her peril and her strength. She is as safe in the perilous hour of conflict as she is at ease in Zion, and safer. Her Lord is saying, "Thou art righteous, O Lord, which art, hast, and shalt be, because thou hast judged thus" (Rev. xix. 1); but he who so nobly and fearlessly defends this cause of "the Judge of all the earth," is not only "The Lord," the bearer of the iron staff of justice, the defender of the Father's throne; but He is always there our glorious Advocate and Intercessor, the "Justifier of the weakest sinner." He was cursed for her sake, and while he is cursed she cannot be cursed everlastingly: "If ye shall ask anything in my name, I will do it." "Have faith in God."

But as we look upon the Jewish Church after this long lapse of time, and remember that His last prayer for her was, "Father, forgive them," do we not feel that distrust and presumption are alike sinful?

But I must for a moment glance at this our Saviour's sermon, by the parable of the barren fig-tree as addressed to individuals. God now sees from "afar off" many flourishing fig-trees, "Having leaves," and "*planted* in his vineyard," whole plantations of them, but they are barren. They may be benevolent persons, because they are rich; they are amiable, because they are at ease; they are at peace, because they are ignorant of their danger; they are sincere and constant in their friendships; loving and noble in their purposes; and they may be useful in regulating human economy; they may adorn homes and adorn society; they may be brilliant in genius, delightful companions of our path, adding cheerful radiance to the sunshine of our day; always dispelling the gloom that would gather around our path; but, O, who can pronounce that, but, upon those we have loved, upon those who have gilded our day of life with beams of light? Can we say, they had all these qualities, and had not "the life of God" to be their spring? Yes, they were of earth, earthy; they have drawn us closer together in earthly ties, but they have done nothing to raise us to God; they have left behind them no "Fruits of the Spirit," no one to say, I am indebted to that man for the light of truth, and of life; they have left behind them no living evidence that

they were themselves grafted into "the true Vine," into the "Tree of life."

But a most awful thought fixes itself upon us here. Have we been faithful to hold up the "Light of life" before them? Have we walked circumspectly before them, that our ministry might not be blamed? Or has our own light within us been darkness? Our individual responsibility, and the responsibility of the Church as an instrument of God's, an organ of His spirit, and of His power, are most awful; the opportunity gone, the day of labour gone, they cannot be recalled. Souls lost! trifled with! O God, for the love of thy dear Son, forgive thy poor worldly, unworthy, unprofitable servants; and have mercy upon poor souls, lost through our unfaithfulness. Christ was, indeed, the "Faithful;" we are all unfaithfulness, although He, "The Light of the world," left the important injunction, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."

But let us look further. Take a selfish man, if he be a man of education, position, riches, and of that tone and refinement which education induces, then there will be all the external qualities of moral health; as in the fig-tree, there will be germinating juices, leaves, a wide-spreading luxuriance that will be seen "afar off;" but really come, and look into the tree, as Jesus did, as God does, and the man's god will be seen to be self; he is living for self: if he have virtue enough to deny self, it would be for the benefit of self; he

would not wear out his body and mind in the service Christ; although selfishness will bring him a selfish suppliance to his feet; he will give a few beggarly elements to Him, purchase price for salvation, but he will not, cannot, give love, his soul. The selfish man is the most religious man the world; his religion is for the salvation of self; but of the glory of God, the increase of his kingdom, and of his spiritual reign, the selfish man has never thought; whereas his natural life was given him, that he might be "born of God," and beget converts to God.

These broad distinctions of character are drawn and redrawn by Christ throughout His ministry: and in contrast to this He has left us a widely different rule of life, "If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple." (Luke xiv. 26.)

Instead, then, of our beautiful and scriptural, still impious indiscriminating burial-service as read alike over all the dead, how much oftener might it be read and written over the greater portion, "Master, behold, the fig-tree which thou cursedst is withered away!"

O God! let not from this time this parable ever pass from our minds, "When the *disciples* saw, they marvelled, saying, How soon is the fig-tree withered away!" "They saw the fig-tree dried up from the roots." "Jesus saith unto them, Have faith in God."

This parable takes us from the world into the chamber

death, into the charnel-house of the dead, to commune with ourselves there. What thoughts does it suggest? First, that we should pray, supplicate, entreat for the barren fig-tree, with all forbearance, longsuffering, patience, tears, and with all solemnity and earnestness; that we should ourselves bless, and curse not; and that we should ask God, too, to bless, and not to curse. And secondly, we should be adoringly grateful, and render our being, body, soul, and spirit, to Him that He has not cursed us, that He has left us to stand, to be dug about, to be *dunged*, it may be, but that He has spared us, and bade us bring forth fruit, fifty, sixty, or an hundredfold. Who can estimate aright the persistence of His grace, that He should lead on one from teaching to teaching, from correction to severer correction as faith is stronger and the inner life able to bear it, from strength to strength, from grace to grace, from glory to glory, from ourselves to Him, from earth to heaven; while another He leaves in darkness, gross darkness, blindness, death. "Cut it down, why cumbereth it the ground?" "Cursedst!"

Oh, Christian Church! murmur not if thy Father, thy Head, be about to chasten thee. He loves thee, He dwells in thee; thou art his instrument for good to the whole world. Oh yes, He loves thee. "Faint not when thou art rebuked of him." "Have faith in God."

Do we now understand the judicial sentence of the Judge upon His throne, high and lifted up? "Unto them that are without, all things are done in parables: that seeing they

may see, and not perceive ; and hearing they may hear, and not understand ; lest at any time they should be converted, and *sins* should be forgiven them." (Mark iv. 12.) "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed." (Gen. ix. 6.) Through the unfaithfulness of the Jewish Church, multitudes of souls had been lost, and the barren fig-tree was cut down. He must be called to judgment, and receive the sentence of death, who destroys souls, for whom Christ died ! Let these two sentences be ever vivid before our mind's eye : "No man eat fruit of thee hereafter for ever." And "His disciples heard."

Such was the parabolical teaching of Christ. In the hands of spiritual men it is safe ; but it would be most perilous to the Church for unconverted men, men untaught by the Spirit, to attempt to explain the metaphor of Scripture, or to meddle with it at all : to them it could only be dark similitudes, crude, undigested matter. Oh ! I repeat, it would be most perilous to the Church of Christ for mere natural talent and superficial knowledge to attempt to explain the metaphorical parts of Scripture. God has set His Holy Oracle in the ark within the vail, in the most holy place, that He may speak from thence when He will, by whom He will. When we approach to consult, to read, to speak to Him, let us put off as much as possible the earthy ; the ground is most holy. "I will open my mouth in parables ; I will utter things which have been kept secret from the foundation of the world." (Matt. xiii. 35.)

CHAPTER V.

ON THE MIRACLES OF CHRIST.

Let now glance at the miracles in Christ's ministry ; they, were sermons to the multitude—to the world ; and often species, as we have seen his parables to have been. The Resurrection of Lazarus seems to meet us as one of the most striking of these. As a miraculous fact, with its accompanying details, it is one of the most grand touching relations in Christ's ministry. My intention is to view it particularly as a prophetic miracle ; one to set forth one of the most awful, and miraculously sudden events of time. Still I would have it clearly understood, that I do not deny the miraculous fact ; to set away the miracles of Christ as some modern teachers do, is certainly no part of my undertaking ; I only intend to show how the one miracle foreshadowed another which is still more amazing, if I may not say more divine. As a historic fact, there was that which was great and human and divine. The tender affection of the God-son for the little family at Bethany, and his spirit of deep sympathy with them, are touchingly expressed : they tell us

in how close a relation He stood to the human family at large ; how by nature humanity was linked to humanity ; how by grace God to man. All the holy sympathies of our human nature are tenderly drawn forth, met, humanly and divinely dealt with ; so that if the miracle related only to our human economy, all the detail of it would be tender, holy, and gracious.

But here I must take a much more grand and extensive view of the miracle, as it lies before us : I see in the whole narrative a type of the spiritual death and resurrection of the Jewish Church, as prophesied of in Judges xix., Ezek. xxxvii., Rev. xi., and in the parable of the prodigal son. Let us look at the facts and their prophetic meaning.

“Now, a certain *man* was sick, Lazarus, of Bethany, the town of Mary and her sister Martha.” (John xi.) The word *man* here in Italics is not in the original, therefore, it is evident, that the mind of the Spirit was to leave the subject open ; a certain man as referring to Lazarus, and a certain body as referring to the Jewish Church.

“It was that Mary which anointed the Lord with ointment, and wiped his feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick.” I know quite well, that it is not a generally received opinion that this Mary was the same as Mary Magdalene ; but after compassing the subject for years, and after looking at it in every possible light, I am sure it was the same. There is a veil of undefined, unexplained record thrown over the Marys of the four Evangelists, and evidently

h design ; it may be, that the profane may not enter into inner sanctuary of God's Temple of his love to man ; le the spiritually discerned, the called according to his pose, may enter into the most Holy Place in the Temple His exalted nature ; and receive from Him there the pel of his Son in all its sanctity, extent, and sublime y. "To the pure, all things are pure : but unto them are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure ; but even r mind and conscience is defiled." (Titus xv.) This is position I always find myself in, in reading the history is family at Bethany. I know the very conjecture that y the sister of Lazarus was the same as Mary Magdalene ld offend some, the Pharisees of the Christian Church, unbelieving, those to whom nothing is pure : but this not alter the divine record ; it is plainly written, "It was y which anointed the Lord with ointment, and wiped his with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick." The dator has added, "It was *that* Mary," this definite pro-, *that*, is not in the original, and therefore I think, the l of the Spirit was to leave the question of these Marys what open, vague, for the reason I have explained. e is no other account in the New Testament of any Mary wiped the Lord's feet with her hair, but Mary Magdalene, (e vii. 44) ; therefore, although we may not try to establish t is not recorded, still, we may not reject what is plainly , because some parts of the narrative are, for obvious ons, left somewhat vague. Christ's reproach to Simon,

"My head with oil thou didst not anoint" (Luke vii. 46), evidently refers to the woman mentioned by St. Matt. xxvi. 7, "There came unto him a woman having an alabaster box of very precious ointment, and poured it on his head, as he sat at meat." The verse before this tells us that this occurred "in Bethany, in the house of Simon the leper." Therefore, it is more than probable that this Simon the leper was the father, and head of this family at Bethany; and that it was the one and the same Mary who performed all the anointings we read of in the four gospels. After the resurrection of her brother we find her in faith performing the same symbolical service in precisely the same manner as Mary Magdalene did: "Then took Mary a pound of ointment of spikenard, very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped his feet with her hair." (John xii. 1—3.) Compare all the records given, and you will find the Mary to be one and the same: (xi. 2; Luke vii. 37, 38; Matt. xxvi. 7—9; Mark xiv. 3, 4.) Leprosy was a type of sin, and it is quite clear that Christ entered the house in Bethany to heal the diseased there. Perhaps Simon was the leper who was so miraculously healed by Christ, and whose cure he so particularly wished made known to the priests. (Matt. viii. 2—4; Mark i. 40, 44, 45.) It is possible Simon, the Pharisee, into whose house Christ entered to preach to him a sermon upon the faith of Mary, was of the same family (Luke vii. 36—43); and that the divine teacher had particular designs of mercy to that family. Even Simon Peter might have been of the

same family. Out of Mary were cast seven devils, a type of the cleansing of the Church during the seven ages of time. (Beth. ii. 9, 12—16; Eph. v. 26, 27; John xx. 1—17.) And it is very possible that the same Lazarus, in the house of Bethany, supplied Christ with language in his parable of the rich man and Lazarus (Luke xvi. 19); this, too, was a sermon of reproof to the priests and Pharisees.

The kingdom of God had come to the house at Bethany, and then God could dwell there. Not once in the life of Christ do we find Him taking up His abode with the affluent and the great for luxurious indulgence, never once for a moment, not even as a retreat from the stern toil of His high commission. "The whole need not a physician, but they which are sick." "I am not come, but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel." These were ever the Divine declarations of His preaching, and, therefore, all the poetry and highflown prose that have been written about this family at Bethany are not only fanciful and unnatural, but absurd. The story of the ruin of a castle at the foot of Olivet is a ridiculous fable. Our Saviour's life was not one of poetry or of romance, but of severe, unceasing labour to set forth the moral grandeur of His Gospel and of His throne. (Matt. xxv. 31, to the end of the chapter.)

I shall show you later in the life of Mary Magdalene, that there was deep, vital, and exalted signification in that anointing; it was faith led her to the feet of Christ, she saw in

Him her High Priest, and she anointed Him as such. (Ps. cxxxiii. 2, 3.) She knew Him to be the Messiah, the Anointed One, and she anointed Him as such. (1 Sam. ii. 10; Ps. ii. 2; xlv. 7; Dan. ix. 25, 26.) She knew Him to be the Living Sacrifice for sin, the Resurrection and Life of His people, and she anointed Him as such. "She did it for my burial." (Matt. xxvi. 12, 13.) She knew Him to be her King, and she anointed Him as such—"poured it on his head." (xxvi. 7; 1 Sam. ii. 10; Heb. vii. 1, 2.) And hence the rebuke to Simon, "My head with oil thou didst not anoint." (Luke vii. 46.) "We have no king but Cæsar," was the cry of the Pharisee and of the priests. This explains to us Mary's preparation of spices and ointments to anoint Christ King after his resurrection; her intention could not be to embalm Him, Nicodemus had done that (John xix. 39); and she had seen the sepulchre sealed with the Roman seal. (Matt. xxvii. 66.) It is true that darkness still conflicted in her mind with light; but her Redeemer was dead, and she believed that He would rise. He had said this, and the resurrection of Lazarus confirmed her faith.

As we see Christ riding into Jerusalem immediately after that last anointing at Bethany, "Fear not, daughter of Sion: behold, thy King cometh" (John xii. 1, 2, 3, 15), we understand how the faith of Mary, if not quite clear, still was sufficiently so for her to prepare the ointment to anoint Him King when he should rise again; but it might not be.

Touch me not: for I am not yet ascended to my Father." His was not then to be a temporal, but a spiritual reign, in the hearts of His people. "Touch me not."

But leaving the question here, about these being one and the same Mary, I shall return to the record of the raising of Lazarus.*

"It was that Mary which anointed the Lord with ointment, and wiped his feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick. *Therefore* his sister sent unto him, saying, 'Lord, behold, he whom thou lovest is sick.'" It is quite clear, from this emphatic *therefore*, that that Mary had received some especial token of favour, which encouraged them to send so promptly to the Lord when their brother was sick. Was it the most sovereign of all heaven's gifts, forgiveness? "Thy sins are forgiven." Was it the most sovereign of all heaven's gifts, peace? "Go in peace." (Luke vii. 48—56.) Well, then, might they send for Him when Lazarus was sick; for, as we have seen, perhaps He had healed him of "sores" as deep as Mary's; and perhaps this was the true meaning of the expression, "He whom thou lovest."

But, as I have said before, my intention is to notice this miracle particularly in its prophetic meaning. And thus viewing it, I believe these two sisters represented two bodies of persons in the Christian Church, as Aholah and Aholibah

* This subject is fully entered into later, in the history of Mary Magdalene.

represented Israel and Judah in the Jewish Church. (Ezek. xxiii. 4.) It might have been, and it may be, the Episcopal and Nonconforming bodies. Even as early as St. Paul, there was division in the body, the Church; and did not she then, as relating to the Jewish Church, send, saying, "Lord, behold, he whom thou lovest is sick!" (Rom. ix. 1—3; x. 1; xi. 1.) I know there are those who will not admit this overreaching meaning; but those who deny the prophetic part of Christ's ministry, deny Him as "the prophet who should come into the world," and abrogate the Word of God as a revelation to guide us on to the end of time. With such I have no sympathy. The Bible is full of historical types. When we accept these, we then, and only then, confess our belief in God as an Omniscient Being; the true, minute detail of these gives faith and undaunted courage to the believer.

"When Jesus heard that, he said, This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby." It is afterwards written, "Lazarus is dead" (xi. 14); therefore this assurance of Christ to the sisters, "This sickness is not unto death," signifies eternal death. As relating to the Jewish Church, the sickness was unto death, but not unto eternal death; she is to rise again. How is her present dead state for the glory of God? and how will the Son of God be glorified thereby? The glory of God is His holiness. He had again and again, during two thousand years, said to her, "Cast away from you

your transgressions, whereby ye have transgressed; and give you a new heart and a new spirit: for why will *ye die*, O house of Israel? For I have no pleasure in the death of him that *dieth*, saith the Lord God: wherefore turn, and live! (Ezek. xviii. 31, 32.) "Turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye *die*, O house of Israel?" (Ib. xxxiii. 11.) She did neither turn nor repent, and it was therefore for the manifestation of the glory, of the holiness of God, that she would die. Think of her as a chosen, sanctified agent of His power, of His grace, as an agent intrusted with the souls of men. Could she be an unfaithful steward,—these precious souls, for whom Christ died, be lost, and God stand passively suffer it, and still be a holy, righteous God?

There was a little suffering Church, an elect few, who in prayer and supplications, and in many afflictions, persecutions, and oppression, were saying, "I beseech thee, show me thy glory." (Luke i. 49—51, 52—55, 71, 74, 75.) Could such supplications die upon the desert air? Impossible. God is always righteous. Oh! if we could take the trouble to read the Bible once through to find out God as a *Righteous* God, we should not dare to provoke Him, to tempt Him, to despise Him, to rebel, to rise up against Him, to sinning, presumption, and wrong. "Thou art *righteous*, O Lord, because thou hast judged thus," always heads the decrees of His Government, and hence the Divine proclamation in that marvellous prelude to the seven vials of time, that His ways are just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints. Who would not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for thou

only art holy : for all nations shall come and worship before thee ; for thy judgments are made manifest." (Rev. xv. 3, 4.) It would be an arrangement of Divine government revolting to our natural instinct, that God should invest a body of men with authority and privilege, shelter them in the name and sanctity of a religious order, suffer them to persecute and oppress, cloak their sin, and demand no account of stewardship at their hands. This was the state of the Jewish Church when this prophetic miracle of Christ occurred. "He hath put down the mighty from their seats, and exalted them of low degree. That we should be saved from our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us." (Luke i.) Do we now understand how her sickness and death were for the glory of God ? To exhibit his holiness and *righteous* dealings. And as in Ezek. xxxvii. and in Rev. xi., we see her body dead when cut off from Christ, and again alive when His Spirit enters into them, do we understand the still further assertion, "that the Son of God might be glorified thereby ?"

When the Church and the world learn the moral elevation of God's throne, earth will blend with heaven, but it never can before. "He hath showed thee, O man, what is good ; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God ?" (Mich. vi. 8.) "I beseech thee show me thy glory."

"Now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus." This love, as we have seen, was Divine love. The sisters had sent to Him, because Mary had heard, "Thy sins are forgiven.

Go in peace." He always thus loves the soul of his people : Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus.

"When he had heard, *therefore*, that he was sick, he abode ~~two~~ *days* still in the same place where he was." What a strange paradox is this ! Why abide where he was ? why not fly to the sorrowing friends to deliver them from their grief ? This little "therefore" tells us, because He loved them. Why did Christ turn a deaf ear to the supplications of St. Paul for his people ? Why has He not heard the prayers, and blessed the efforts of the Christian Church to heal her sickness, to awaken her from sleep, to raise her from the dead ? Because He loves them : the ninth and eleventh chapters of Romans are remarkable upon the subject. When the Deliverer shall come out of Sion to turn away ungodliness from Jacob, Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus will exclaim together, "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God."

These two days signify two dispensations ; perhaps, then, Christ will in some special manner awaken some of the house of Israel ; but we shall see, later, He will not raise the dead body till the fourth day, or, as it is in the Revelation (xi. 11), "three days and an half" from the time Revelation was complete ; therefore, the "four days" (John xi. 17—39) may refer to the spiritual deadness of that Church from the time of Rehoboam, or more particularly to the house of Israel from that time, as the life of God first became extinct in her. Should not this teach us the awful nature of sin, the

damnable crime of the true Church, crucifying their Messiah? "Father, forgive them!" has never yet prevailed for them; He abides still in the same place where He was; and His blood is on them, and on their children. And should not His own teaching teach us to be penitent, stedfast, and believing under the hidings of God's face? to examine ourselves, to confess our sins, and to set out resolutely afresh for heaven, by prayer, by diligence, by more active service? If Jesus abides two days still in the same place where He was, it is because there is reason why He should do so, some latent sin unsuspected, some agitation of the mind uncontrolled; and He abides there because He loves us. Oh! then, in every trial, in affliction, and in distress, let this truth sink deep into our hearts, that *sin is the cause*. Jesus would have us perfect as He was perfect, and He loves our souls too well not to arouse us by His silence and His absence.

"Then after that saith he to his disciples, Let us go into Judea again. His disciples say unto him, Master, the Jews of late sought to stone thee; and goest thou thither again?" I know there is such an objection in the public mind to read the figurative part of Scripture, the underlying signification, that I am afraid to lay open the mind of the Spirit as I find it, composing theories and facts, and the whole composing a perfect system of revelation. But I would ask here, Is this feeling in the public mind reverence for the Scriptures? fear and awe of misinterpreting them? or is it indifference to

them? a sinful content with only a superficial knowledge of them; content with the surface, not caring to go down into the mines where lies the richest treasure, too indolent to go into the depth, to search by long and diligent study for the things *ever new*, which may be found there.

I believe these two verses refer to the time when Christ will return to our earth, to reorganize the Church before He returns to reign. "When the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?" (Luke xviii. 8.) And we find different advents clearly foretold. (Ezek. xxiv. 27; xxxvii. 24—27; Rev. xiv. 1; Matt. xxiv. 30.) And in Rev. vii. and ii. we find Christ descending to give life to the Jewish Church.

Viewing the world in the state represented by St. Luke, the inquiry seems a very natural one even for the Church triumphant to make: "The Jews of late sought to stone thee; and goest thou thither again?" and the more so when we remember their rejection of Him in his first advent.

It has been said to me, "It would be a poor triumph indeed for Christ to return to our world simply as a Minister of God to His people;" but I think it would be the greatest of all triumphs to be and to do in His second advent that which all the sent ones of the world's history have failed to do, although the legal purchase of salvation had been completed by Him,—again to derobe the Church of the world, to unite her spiritually and eternally with heaven. See the grand and Divine reality in Rev. vii. from the ninth verse.

Or the going into Judea again may refer to His spi-
 ritual return to the Jewish Church. See the Divine reality,
 in the resurrection of the dry bones (Ezek. xxxvii., a
 Rev. xi. 11, 12); and as we see that Church still dead,
 in sin, till the Spirit of Christ returns to it, do we not un-
 derstand the inquiry of the disciples; because, be it noted
 those same disciples are now, and will be then, reigning
 Christ in His spiritual kingdom, together with the
 body extant which they represented? (Luke xxii. 29
 Rev. v. 10; Matt. xxvi. 29.) I say then, do we not un-
 derstand the inquiry of the disciples? of heaven itself? "the
 of late sought to stone thee; and goest thou thither aga-
 in? The inquiry was equivalent to this, Will that Church, as
 seen by us from hence, now receive you; or, will she do
 violence to Thy kingdom as before? His answer to
 the question, considering the inquiry in this prophetic
 is striking and luminous: "Jesus answered, Are there
 twelve hours in the day? If any man walk in the day,
 he stumbleth not, because he seeth the light of this world.
 If a man walk in the night, he stumbleth; because there
 is no light in him." It will be seen in a moment that the
 state of the Jewish Church, and her state of light and life
 after her resurrection robes, are herein set forth. In the one
 she would do violence to the kingdom of God; in the other,
 she stumbleth not. The language, or metaphor, was borrow-
 ed from the prophecies. (Jer. xiii. 16; Isa. lix. 10.)
 "twelve hours in the day" may refer to the millen-

reign, when that Church shall again "be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years." (Rev. xxi. 6.) The *twelve* hours in the day, and the thousand years, both simply signify a round of time.

"These things said he : and after that he saith unto them, Our friend Lazarus sleepeth ; but I go, that I may awake him out of sleep. Then said his disciples, Lord, if he sleep he shall do well. Howbeit Jesus spake of his death : but they thought that he had spoken of taking of rest in sleep." We understand this language with regard to Lazarus ; but from a prophetic point of view, we see how the sleep and rest of natural death weighed in the mind of the Spirit who spake by the disciples.

"Then said Jesus unto them plainly, Lazarus is dead." See Lazarus dead, as here foreseen by Christ. (Ezek. xxxvii. 2 ; Rev. xi. 8, 9.) Read and compare these two chapters with the remainder of this sacred record of the resurrection of Lazarus. "The resurrection and the life" of the one, are the two witnesses" of the other.

"And I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, to the intent ye may believe ; nevertheless, let us go unto him." This tells us plainly that the design of God in judgment, is to convince of sin ; and then to lead on the convinced sinner to believe in Christ : "Of sin, because they believe not on me." Does not the dead state of the Jews convince of sin, and will not their resurrection, as so gloriously prophesied of, be to the intent that the world may believe? (Rom. xi. 15.)

Since the world began, the rebuke has ever been, "They repented not of their deeds." (Rev. xvi. 10, 11.)

"Then said Thomas, which is called Didymus, unto his fellow disciples, Let us also go, that we may die with him." What a request! what rash presumption! and yet how prophetically ominous! The verse is very remarkable, comparing it with the unbelief of Thomas. (John xx. 25.) "I will not believe." He was one of the representatives of the body of the Christian Church. How often has she said, "I will not believe;" but Jesus has been very gracious to her, and suffered her to reach forth her finger to behold His hands, and to thrust her hand into His side, with the command, "Be not faithless, but believing;" and she has answered, with Thomas, "My Lord, and my God." But even now, is she convinced of sin,—so perfected that she is sinless? Is the burden of sin so intolerable, that she is ready to say with Thomas, "Let us also go, that we may die with him?" Is she ready to die to the world,—to die to self,—to die, that she may believe, that the Son of God may be glorified thereby? Without this concession, surrender, death, there cannot be eternal life!

"Then when Jesus came, he found that Lazarus had lain in the grave *four* days already." In Revelation xi. 11 we read, "After three days and a-half the spirit of life from God entered into them," which means after three dispensations and a-half from the completion of inspiration (xi. 7); therefore, these "four days," as I have said before,

may refer to the decline of the house of Israel, after the division of the kingdom in the reign of Rehoboam : this will account for the expressions, "Lazarus sleepeth," "Lazarus is dead."

"Then said Martha unto Jesus, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died." This verse sets forth to us most lucidly, the doctrine of life only in union with Christ, which is so marvellously taught in Revelation xi. He is our Head, our strength, our life ; and to be cut off from Him is death. Had the Jewish Church been in Him, she had not died ; and hence the strong, emphatic expressions, Rev. xi. 7—9. Oh, let this doctrine of relationship to Christ, and of life in Him, sink deep into our hearts and minds ! Believers in vital union with Him can never die. See this beautifully taught by Christ Himself in the parable of the Vine. (John xv.)

"But I know, that even now, whatsoever *thou wilt ask of God*, God will give it thee." Have we this absolute faith in Christ as our Intercessor, which Martha had ? No equivocation, no self-confidence. The case was not too desperate ; Lazarus was not too dead,—he had not been too long dead ; that "I know that even now, whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it thee." I love, very much, this verse. Our way may be dark, difficult ; we may have to encounter great mountains of sin, of difficulties we cannot remove ; we may seem to be driven further and further from serving God aright, but we may rest here,—"*I know, that even now.*"

Let the Romish Church have her Mary for an Intercessor; but let us afresh anoint the Head of the Church our High Priest, and the result will be as here, life from the dead. "Jesus saith unto her, Thy brother shall rise again."

"Martha saith unto him, I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day." It is difficult to reconcile this want of apprehension in Martha with her faith; she believed that all things were possible with God; but the assurance that her brother should then stand before her alive as before, might for a moment have startled that faith. The resurrection was possible in the distance, "at the last day;" but, strange miracle! was it possible then? The Author of life was, as it were, inspiring faith, alluring his believing listener to spiritual-mindedness, which is life, and so on to life eternal. "Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?" This is a part of our burial service; but oh, let it be henceforth a part of our living service, of the Gospel service! Let it be read from our pulpits, over the living, over the world, and not over our graves; over Martha as well as over Lazarus; over the living, dead in trespasses and sins; let life be brought to us now, and not when we are dead. "In the grave there is no remembrance of Thee." As I have said, the sisters represent here the Christian Church—Lazarus, the Jewish; contemplate them as they stand side by side: the one shall rise again; the

er, if she continue strong, and stedfast in the faith, shall never die. Oh, Church of the living God, "believest thou as?" Take afresh this verse for thy stronghold in this y approaching day of trial: die not as thy sister kingdom ed, as the house of Israel died; be not cast off from thine lead as she was: "I have no pleasure in him that dieth, saith the Lord God." The third vial will be to awake thee out of sleep, to raise those in thee who are dead in sin; but thou must not die, the life of thine Head is in thee, and thou must to the end of time "take root downward, and bring forth fruit upward." The meaning of this passage here, "Whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die," is this,—that no individual, or a body, shall not, even in this life, come under "the condemnation of the devil" (1 Tim. iii. 6); that the "Accuser of the brethren" (Rev. xii. 10), may cause them to be judged, falsely accused: he loves to clothe the dead with light, and the living with death; but the undercurrent of the soul is pure, he cannot touch that, and our blessed Redeemer knew that undercurrent of the soul of His people when He said, "Your joy no man taketh from you." I say, the meaning of the words of Christ is this, that he that liveth and believeth, shall never come under the condemnation of God. "Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died." "There is no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus." "The judgment was by one to condemnation, but the free gift is of many offences unto justification." (Rom. v. 16; viii. 34.) And hence the remarkable words of

Christ, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that he word, and believeth on him that sent me, *hath* e life, and *shall not* come into condemnation; but from death unto life." (John v. 24.) God's reign is as absolute now, if not as complete, as it ever. In such, the prince of this world only has to be condemned, and completely "cast down." (xvi. 1) Christian Church, fallible, imperfect, poor, and wretched she is, still does believe; she *hath* passed from death to life, and therefore cannot *die*, although she may be chastisement. Her Head, her Intercessor, was made "after the power of an endless life." (Heb. vii. 1) He may abide two days in the same place where He was crucified, find His people "lain in the grave four days;" they may cry to Him from thence, "I know that even now, soever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it thee," His answer will be, "Thou shalt rise again. I am the resurrection and the life."

Oh, then, let us found afresh our creed, our hope, and of eternal life, upon this grand resurrection scene. It does not tell us more of life from the dead, than it does of life from the death of sin. There are now multitudes of the Christian Church which is called the Christian Church as dead in sin, as Lazarus in his grave was dead.

"The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live." (John v. 25.) Oh, then, Church of the living

this third vial of time, say with Martha, "Yea, Lord: I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world." Say with His disciples, "Lord, increase our faith;" with the father whose child was possessed with an evil spirit, "Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief."

"And when Martha had so said, she went her way, and called Mary her sister secretly, saying, The Master is come, and calleth for thee." I have said before, prophetically considered, these two sisters represented two bodies, the Episcopal and Nonconforming bodies of our Church, as Aholah and Aholibah represented Israel and Judah (Ezek. xxiii.) and as Jeruhamah and Lo-ammi represented them. (Hos. i.) I know the ignorant will not believe that God descends to such minute detail in His Word, but this will not shake the faith of the instructed.

Why did Martha, the representative of the Episcopal body, call her sister *secretly*? When the Master came and called Mary, was Martha for the first time startled at the call? Did conscience tell her she had expelled a sister from her bosom? St. Luke tells us, "A certain woman named Martha received him into her house" (x. 38); but though she did receive her Lord a guest into her house, still there was disturbance in her mind, grievance, because her sister *had left* her, left her to bear the burden of office alone; and she was angry, too, at the unconcern of Christ for this; and she was so in the wrong, and had so far forgotten herself, that she

not only begged that He would rebuke her sister, but she undertook sharply to rebuke Him because He did not care; but His answer was a rebuke to herself. "Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things; but one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her." Let us beware how we expel a sister from our bosom, how we lift up a prayer to Christ against His anointed. "Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand." Let Martha beware how she arrogates to herself alone all the burden of office, or in the day of need she may peevishly inquire, "Lord, dost thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone? bid her therefore that she help me."

But from this Divine, beautiful narrative, let us learn both to serve and to wait; for it was Martha who was the first to go out to meet her Lord; "Mary sat still in the house," and no sooner had she learned from Him the mighty doctrine of life from the death of sin, of resurrection life, of eternal life in Himself alone, and had humbly and believingly made her confession to Him, "Thou art the Christ," than she went her way, and called Mary her sister secretly, saying, "The Master is come, and calleth for thee." Doubtless Martha was a little ashamed, startled at the call; her secret movement tells us this; but there was no more discord, no more rivalry; the Master was come, and the sisters were one, and at peace. "David my

servant shall be king over them; and they all shall have one shepherd." (Ezek. xxxvii. 24.)

"As soon as Mary heard that, she arose *quickly*." Now we hear of Protestant alliances, that union is strength; but Mary does not rise up quickly.

Still Martha's love of office was not quite extinguished even by the Royal Presence; perhaps she had been too long invested with authority to lay it down at once. "Martha loved," even when the risen brother sat at table with their life-giving Head, but Mary still sat at his feet." (John xii. 3.)

There is a very great similarity of detail in this narrative of Martha going out to meet Christ, and in her confession of faith in Him, with the narrative of Peter going out of the ship to meet Him upon the water. Peter was the representative of the Christian Church; and the two narratives may both alike foreshadow the second return of Christ to our world. "O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt? When they came and worshipped him, saying, Of a truth thou art the Son of God." (Matt. xiv. 31—33.)

But to return to the narrative of the resurrection of Lazarus. Then when *Mary* was come where Jesus was, and saw him, she fell down at his feet, saying unto him, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died." I think it almost profane to confine this emphatic expression, vital faith, and confident assertion of both the sisters, to the circumstance of the death of Lazarus. Had Christ been

there, it is true He might have performed a miraculous cure, and Lazarus might not have died; but here the assertion is positive; impossibility is implied; "My brother had not died." The mind of the Spirit seems to be, disunion from Christ would have been impossible.

"When Jesus therefore saw her weeping, and the Jews also weeping which came with her, he groaned in the spirit, and was troubled." This groaning in spirit was prayer. As the Lord Jehovah bent his steps towards the little town of Bethany, as He drew nigh to the house of mourning, to the grave, He groaned, and was troubled; the wreck of nature lay at His feet, the departed spirit that was at rest in His Father's bosom was to return, and He groaned in spirit. If we would see the dead in sin raised to life, we must pray, we must groan in spirit, and be troubled. "Jesus wept." This human sympathy was very beautiful and holy, and shows us how entirely that nature was one with our own. Did we never, as it were, feel our soul recoil, troubled, as we approached the house, the chamber of death? Did we never feel creep over us almost the chill of death at the tidings of death? Oh! I love to think of our Intercessor in heaven in the nature He bore upon earth. His physical nature was shaken, and His soul and spirit shrank at the ghastly spectre death, as He saw its ravage amongst those He loved. (Matt. xiv. 12—15.)

But this Divine love for the Church, which had so satanically rejected, and which He knew would crucify Him, which

had so wilfully rejected life, is here grand and imposing, as we see Him, the Author of Life, bend over the dead, as we see the God weep over the tomb.

“Then said the Jews, Behold how he loved him !” Yes, “God is love,” Infinite love. When He departs and abides in the same place where He was, still, He is love ; when we are dead to Him, still He is love ; when, like Lazarus, we are corruption in the grave, still He is love. “God so loved the *world* ;” while we repose in His human sympathy, let us try more to compass His divine love, the depth of that attribute, which in Infinite wisdom is causing all things to work together for our good.

Should not this overflowing love of the God for the dead Body of the Jews shame the arrogance, the ambition, and the cold-hearted trifling of multitudes who have now the care of souls ? Oh, let them look again at their Divine Master, weeping, groaning, troubled in spirit.

“And some of them said, Could not this man, which opened the eyes of the blind, have caused that even this man should not have died ?” This is a very deep question, one that might lead us on into a field of speculation broad as time, long as eternity, if it were not that the unseen world will in a moment solve the problem ; in the meantime let us glance at the question as it lies before us. Could not He who preached the gospel to the poor, who healed the broken-hearted, who gave sight to the blind, hearing to the deaf, who cast out devils, raised the dead, who forgave sin, took away

the sin of the world, and preached himself the way, the truth, and the life, the light of the world; could not He have caused that Lazarus, the Jewish Church, had not died? Could not He have caused that the evil nature, sin, the devil, had never had place in the heart of man, in our world? Could He not have caused that the human family had not died in Adam? that there had been no rebellion in heaven? that the angels had not fallen there? Yes, He could have caused all this; still He is not the responsible agent because He did not. He made all perfect, with a *will* as perfect as His own, if not as immutable: had the first gift of the Creator been resolutely exercised to obey, the immutable nature would have been attained to. "They were both naked, the man and his wife, and were *not* ashamed." (Gen. ii. 25). By virtue of "the tree of life" (ii. 9), they might have attained to immutability, immortality, eternal life; but by partaking of the tree of the knowledge of evil, "they knew that they were naked." God, then, to avenge his honour, his glory, and to exhibit the devil, must institute a warfare between Himself in "the second Adam," and the aggressor. Thus we see, God suffered evil to prevail, not because He could not prevent it, but for the universal exhibition of His glorious nature; a nature of truth, holiness, and justice, capable of consuming evil. "It shall bruise thy head." He will expose, judge, condemn, and execute justice upon the devil. "Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out." If we exercise an intelligent will, God will exercise Omnipotent power.

We must receive the Word of God as He has given it to us, and not try to explain away palpable truth. "The creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope." (Rom. viii. 20.)

In the first Adam, the human family died, just as Lazarus died, that in Christ all might be made alive. (1 Cor. xv. 22.)

"This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God," to exhibit His holiness, "that the Son of God might be glorified thereby." "I am the resurrection, and the life :

he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?" By living upon Christ, "the

tree of life," we have power to attain to immutability, to immortality; and let this be our confidence, and our stronghold,

when it is inquired, "Could not this man, which opened the eyes of the blind, have caused that even this man should not

have died?" The government of God is not an arbitrary, despotic one; but deeply and wisely constituted for His

glory in the utter extinction of the devil, that He may in "the fulness of time be put an end to." (Eph. i. 10; Col. i. 20; Heb. ii. 14.)

"Jesus, therefore, again groaning in himself, cometh to the grave. It was a cave, and a stone lay upon it." This

groan was again prayer, the voice of the Eternal Spirit, the messenger between earth and heaven whose divine fiat is to

raise all the unforgotten dead. I would see the pleading groan which is to do this, to raise the whole dead body

of the human family from the grave, turn to *Jonah* 1, 2—7. If you would see the prayer, the pleading *g* which brought life and immortality to life, turn to *N* xxvi. 39, 42—44; xxvii. 50; *Luke* xxiii. 34. The *w* body of the lost family of man then lay in a cave, a stone lay upon it, even “the stone” who had redeemed but the Omnipotent fiat went forth, “Take ye away stone,” and the dead awoke, and came forth. Did we consider the depth, extent, nature, and Omnipotence of *t* power?

“Martha, the sister of him that was dead, saith unto *h* Lord, by this time he stinketh : for he hath been dead *f* days.” How can we trifle as we do, revel in sin as we with this brand upon its nature, “stinketh?” “The *w* of sin is death. The strength of sin is the law ;” but at mouth of the charnel-house of the dead, in the hand of “resurrection and the life,” is a veto even to the *law* of sin death, a preventive enactment. “Jesus saith unto her, I not unto thee, that if thou wouldest believe, thou shoul see the glory of God.” This is one of the most commanding, inspiriting, and imposing passages of Scripture. God *l* us on, step by step, in the divine life; difficulties one the other fall before us; we raise our Ebenezers, and fresh assurance of His faithfulness gives new vigour, life, new faith; the Arch of Covenant promise lowers its our necessity, becomes more and more visible, more *r* with Divine light in proportion to our difficulty, so that

dark cloud has passed away, and the glorious Arch of Covenant promise only remains, still more luminous than before, to improve us for our fears, to give us more faith and steadfastness for the future. The dark cloud again covers our skies, even darker than before, perhaps too dark for the bow of promise to be seen at all by the eye of sense, or of faith, but it is there; and it is infantile to be afraid, wicked to distrust God in the darkest day that He may bring upon the earth. Yes, I say it is sinful; because, when the cloud has passed away, physical nature may have received a shock that time cannot remedy, and the willing mind may ever after be left to write, "The heart truly is willing, but the flesh is weak." It is the one purpose of the devil in all ages to swallow up the Church, to cause her to become extinct, her name to be blotted out from off the earth. I should like to impress this truth very deeply upon the minds of my readers. (Rev. xii. 15—17.)

The strong, divinely instructed Christian is not afraid; he walks by faith, and not by sight; he *lives* by his faith; he always hears the voice, "Stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord, which He will show you to-day." (Exod. xiv. 13.) And thus led on by the light and life of God, he stands still in the clift of the rock, Christ, while His glory passes by (xxxiii. 19—22); then he remembers the assurance, "Whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die:" and the searching interrogation seems more pointed than before, "Believest thou this?" And the still more awakening

question, the more startling examination proceeds, "*Sai not unto thee*, that if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldst see the glory of God?" The believer thus beholding the glory of the Lord, his holiness, he is changed into the same image from glory to glory, by the Spirit of the Lord. Oh, what sublime teaching! what real, divine experience is this! Is it not an embodiment of the truth, "I am the resurrection and the life?" I say, is not this teaching an embodiment of the doctrine of life in Christ? "He that heareth my word, and believeth on Him that sent me, *hath* everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but *is passed* from death unto life." Oh, Church of the living God, fear not the cloud that is about to be brought upon the earth! It may be so dark that you cannot see the bow of promise, but it is there; Christ is incarnate therein, an advocate therein. "I will set my bow in the cloud, and it shall come to pass, when I bring a cloud over the earth, I will look upon it." Ye God looks upon the Mediator through whom He is covenant with man, and the cloud passes away.

"Then they took away the stone from the place where the dead was laid. And Jesus lifted up his eyes, and said unto His Father, I thank Thee that thou hast heard me. And when he had thus spoken, he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth. And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot in graveclothes: and his face was bound about with napkin. Jesus said unto them, Loose him, and let him go. This thanksgiving of Christ because his Father had heard Him

is very remarkable; we do not read that He had prayed, therefore it evidences what I have said, that the groaning in the spirit was prayer; and it is the more remarkable, as the petition had not been received when He lifted up his eyes and said, "Father, I thank Thee that thou hast heard me."

The description of Lazarus bound hand and foot, with graveclothes, and his face bound about with a napkin, is very figurative of those "whom Satan hath bound." The Christian, and the Church collectively, feel the shroud in which they are bound; they feel the prestige of temporal things to be a winding-sheet, to be fetters, chains, thralldom; they do not know how to break off; they do not know whether to wear that false garb, the prestige of things temporal; to the weak, to become weak, that they might by all means save some (1 Cor. ix. 22), or to throw it off with disdain as unworthy of the Christian life; but whether they do this or not, they will ever feel it to be their graveclothes, the napkin about the face by which they are blindfolded. It is "the Babylonish garment," and hence that stupendous description of the overthrow of the Babylon of the true Church in Rev. xviii., "Come out of her, my people;" but we cannot till the Divine fiat goes forth, "Loose him, and let him go."

"Come unto me." (Matt. xi. 28.) This has a much more extensive meaning than many suppose. Come into my kingdom; come, till all else has lost its charm; come, till the beggarly elements of the world have fallen from your

shoulder ; come, till you repose in me ; come, till you know no will but mine ; come, till you are encircled in my nature ; come, till you lose sight of all beside. "Come, take up the cross, and follow me." This is to cease from labour, this is rest. "Bid me come unto thee on the water. And he said, Come." (Matt. xiv. 29.) The surging billow, the cold flood of death, must be passed. Come, leave all behind ; come, in faith ; rise above the last wave as it sweeps over thy guilty head ; listen not to its roar ; look not at the yawning depth below, but straight onward ; and listen still to the voice breaking from the shore, "Come." "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you." (Matt. xxv. 34.) This is to cease from labour, this is rest. But can the world rise up out of the grave ? No. It hears the call, "Come up hither ;" but the shroud and the winding-sheet must be unloosed : "Loose him, and let him go."

It is very remarkable that, in the last prophecy of the resurrection of the Jewish Church, Christ should have employed almost the same words as are here used, "Loose the four angels which are bound in the great river Euphrates." (Rev. ix. 14.) Then, in that latter-day glory, the earth will yield her increase, the sweat of man's brow will not damp his spiritual fervour, the glory of the prince of this world will not dim the glory which excelleth, the indulgence of animal nature, the pleasures of sense will not enchain spiritual ardour : "Loose him, and let him go." The sordid things of time will not then clip the wings of faith, and love, and

holy service. "Loose the four angels which are bound in the great river Euphrates." See Lazarus then. (Rev. xiv. 6—9, 18, 19.) "Said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldst believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God?" Oh, let us apply this to ourselves. The hidings of God's face are to show us His holiness, His glory, just as the long, dead state of the Jews will show them God upon the throne of His glory.

But a thought still breaks upon me here I cannot avoid: that Church thus came under condemnation, is the Christian Church in no danger of judgment? Christ came under condemnation, under the condemnation of the Jewish Sanhedrim, of the lesser council of twenty-five, of the Romish *sufferance*. *My sufferance*, because it is very remarkable that that tribunal, the world, should have absolutely refused to pass the sentence of death, but that the Church should have done it, revelling in hellish triumph. (John xviii. 38; xix. 2—4, 6, 7, 10, 11.) "He that delivered me unto thee hath the *greater sin*." "We have a law, and by our law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God." From whence came this condemnation? What law was this? "The law of sin," of the devil. "He was a murderer from the beginning." But what development of the law of sin was it in the Jews which led to the crucifixion? Pride, because the reign of Cæsar presented to them more *glory* than the reign of Christ: they had not come to Him in the *glory* of His kingdom; the poor beggarly elements of the world, the graveclothes of Cæsar

wrapped themselves about them, and the essential holiness of Christ they despised.

But Christ not only came under the condemnation of human law, of Satanic law, the law of sin, but He came also under the condemnation of the Divine law. What law was this? The law of the essential holiness of God; that which demanded a price equivalent to the foul, deep blot fallen upon His fair creation; that which could countervail the damage done (Esth. vii. 4), which would counterwork the evil nature crept in; which could counter-revolutionize the kingdom of darkness; which could countersign Himself "The Prince;" sign Himself "The Prince of Peace." Who could counter-seal His elect? (Eph. i. 13; iv. 30; 2 Tim. ii. 19.) Who could countersink the devil? (1 John iii. 8; Heb. ii. 14.) Christ did all this, when He cried, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" This cry was the pressure of the law, "Ichabod, the glory of God is departed." Death and the grave were "Ichabod, the glory of God is departed." "Who his own self bare our sins *in his* own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed." (1 Pet. ii. 24.) "His soul was not left in hell." (Acts ii. 31.) The God was justified in the Spirit (1 Tim. iii. 16), and hence the Power, the third Person in the Holy Trinity, the God, to counter-revolutionize hell, to destroy the devil. (Acts ii. 1, 2, 3, 4; Matt. xii. 28.)

I stop here to ask again, Is the Christian Church in no

danger of judgment—in no danger of condemnation by the
Divine law? Has she received or denied the Lord who
 bought her? Have the beggarly elements of the world fallen
 from her shoulders? Has the glory of Cæsar fallen from her
 eyes? Have the graveclothes of Lazarus been removed from
 her; his napkin unbound from about her face? Has she come
 to Christ so as to find ineffable repose, peace, *satisfaction* in
 Him? Has she so come to Him that His kingdom has triumphed
 over the kingdom of the prince of this world? Has she so come
 to Him, so *seen* His *glory*, so felt His Divine love, so believed
 in Him, that there is not a desire, a struggle for extraneous
 glory? Has she risen to the choice, to the attainment of
 Mary? to the choice of the one thing needful, which should
 not have been taken from her? “God hath highly exalted him,
 and given him a name which is above every name: that at
 the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven,
 of those in earth, and of those under the earth.” (Phil. ii. 10.)
 “He that believeth not shall be damned” (Mark xvi. 16,)
 come into condemnation. As of the individual, so of the
 body. Has the Christian Church received or denied Christ?
 The Apostles represented her. “Peter said unto him, Though
 I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee. Likewise
 also said *all the disciples*.” She has denied Him, and when
 He reveals Himself to her “upon the throne of his glory”
 (Matt. xxv. 31), “upon a throne high and lifted up” (Isa.
 vi. 1); when He passes by in judgment, in His glory; she
 will be convinced of sin, self-condemned. “Verily I say

unto thee, That *this night*, before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me *thrice*" (Matt. xxvi. 34, 35)—referring to the three dispensations. The "gourd" came up in a *night*, and perished in a *night*. (Jonah iv. 10.) I know the Church will go out, and weep bitterly when she remembers the word which Jesus said unto her. She has only "followed him afar off," now she must be brought to his feet."

"Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee on the water. And He said, Come." She may be afraid, she may begin to sink: "Lord, save me:" she cannot sink. "Come. And immediately Jesus stretched forth His hand, and caught him." (Matt. xiv. 31.) Let the Church try to erase that "*If*," and substitute in its place, "Come, come to Jesus." And let these two verses bear her across the billow of that night, on the water to go to Jesus: "Whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this? Said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest *see* the *glory* of God?" God can put upon us no greater honour than to show us Himself. "When he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is." (1 John iii. 2.)

O what a stupendous, Divine record is this of the resurrection of Lazarus! I do not deny that it was a type of the general resurrection of the dead, I know it was. Though every particle of the element of earth were dead bodies, dust, again transmigrated dust, still the great change must come, when they shall be raised in incorruption, in honour, in

power, in *glory*. "God giveth to every seed his own body." But a resurrection from the death of sin; a continuity, and eternal life through faith in Christ, are as clearly taught in the miracle as is the doctrine of the general resurrection: and therefore, before leaving the subject, I would contrast a being, inspired by faith, "born of God," against Lazarus dead; the case is the same in the spiritual, as in the natural sense.

God wants in this field of action an army of living men (Ezek. xxxvii. 10), soldiers in his service, commanders whom he can lead on to action and to victory; faithful, humble, diligent, believing men, girt in the whole armour of God, whom he can lead on to face the foe, who will not forsake His cause, who will not be traitors to His cause; but who will to preserve pure and holy every faculty of body, soul, and mind to devote to His service. Look abroad at the Jews, see Lazarus dead; look into Revelation, and see him again (Ezek. xxxvii. 10; Rev. vii. and xi.); and, as we would, let us seek more as individuals, and as a body, to be like Lazarus, to go forth into the thickest and hottest of Lord's battles, with the royal standard of the tribe of Judah floating in our ranks—"Thou hast made us unto our kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth." (Rev. v. 10; i. 5, 6.)

But, it may be asked, how can we attain to this resurrection from the dead? I would answer, by receiving life from Incarnate God of the Word. (John vi. 33, 48—63.)

There are four degrees in the Christian course—the knowledge of God, the life of God, the salvation of God, and the glory of God. “We all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.”

“Said I not unto thee, that if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God?”

CHAPTER VI.

MIRACLES OF CHRIST.

miracle of healing the centurion's servant was a sermon in the ministry of Christ, to teach the people the power and efficacy of faith in Himself. We find a Roman, a heathen, in authority, coming to Him with all the humility of a slave; towards his servant, all the overflowing love and gentleness of a Christian master, with the perfected faith of a saint of God. "He came beseeching Jesus, and saying, My servant lieth at home sick of the palsy, grievously tormented." (Matt. viii.) This occurred in the beginning of His ministry, immediately after His sermon upon the Mount. Where had a Roman centurion gained such a knowledge of Him? Where such a confident belief in Him? He addressed Him as the Lord God, and, without a moment's doubt, besought Him to exercise His omnipotent power. His faith seemed so perfected, that it required no sign to be manifested. "Jesus saith unto him, I will come and heal him." The compliance was as prompt as the request had been, but it did not fill him with any foolish pride or importance; on the contrary, it only drew from him a deeper impression of true humility, of loftier faith, of confession

of his belief in God: "*Lord*, I am not worthy that thou shouldest come under my roof: * but speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed." Nothing could be more confident, more evident of a mind divinely instructed; and his military illustration of his faith and obedience to Divine command is very singular. All who know anything of military discipline, and particularly of Roman military discipline, will appreciate it: "*For* I am a man under authority, having soldiers under me: and I say to this man, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it." † This was at once an intelligent acknowledgment of Christ as a Person in great authority, rank, right, power; and subjection to Him is what is here so beautifully implied: You command, and I am ready to obey: "Speak the word only," and disease itself shall obey you, "My servant shall be healed." Sovereign Lord, all is under thy command.

Are we as ready to obey the Captain of our Salvation as this Roman soldier? Have we learned prompt, implicit obedience as he had? Are we waiting the word of command as he was? Are we as instructed in Christian discipline as he? The example always strikes me as grand and martial, and it is quite clear the great "Commander to the people" (Isa. lv. 4) viewed this coming of the centurion to Him in this

* This is very expressive of the etiquette with regard to rank in the army.

† The writer was particularly struck with the force of this passage in visiting a camp, and seeing the military order and discipline.

nat light: "When Jesus heard it, *he marvelled*, and said to them
 ord and that followed, Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great
 be faith, no, not in Israel." I say, the great "Commander to the
 eted; people" viewed the conduct of the centurion in this imposing
 to D respect. He was evidently touched, deeply moved at the right-
 g of f al, Divine preferment given to Himself by the centurion;
 disc and hence the laudatory return of commendation, for the God
 auth ould bestow no greater, "I have not found so great faith,
 Go, he, not in Israel." This is a most startling assertion, because
 ; as in it is included the little true Church which had brought
 as the Royal Leader, received Him, and submitted to Him
 in when He came. The assertion might have applied to Israel
 as distinct from Judah; but be this as it may, it was a most
 sweeping reproof: it was more, for Christ proceeded imme-
 diately to pronounce the sentence of condemnation upon that
 unbelieving house: "The children of the kingdom shall be
 cast out into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and
 gnashing of teeth." The expulsion of the Jewish Church,
 and the consignment of a body of people to the second death,
 are both here implied.

But again, where had the centurion been taught? How
 had he attained to this high attainment in faith and doctrine
 in the Divine life, so graciously and instinctively recognised
 by our Lord? I think it possible he had long been a diligent
 student of the Sacred Writings. St. Luke throws some
 further light upon his history. He says, the elders of the
 Jews, whom he first sent to Jesus, said, "He was *worthy*, for

whom he should do this." Perhaps this word worthy had been put into their mouths by the centurion, saying, "Go, and say, I am not worthy." But their appreciation of him was different from his own opinion of himself: "For he loveth our nation, and he hath built us a synagogue." (Luke vii. 5.) So we see that he was really a believer, a Christian. Perhaps he had read the prophet Isaiah, and his own position (a Roman officer), had caused his eye to fall with peculiar interest upon the passage I have quoted; and hence the very singular and martial recognition and confession of his lord, and subjection to his superior Officer in the field, to "the Commander of the people." "And Jesus said unto the centurion, Go thy way; and as thou hast believed; so be it done unto thee. And his servant was healed in the selfsame hour." This convert to Christianity, the narrative of whom is so beautifully recorded in the early part of Christ's ministry, was a type of the call of the Gentile Church; this is evident from the sentence of condemnation of the Jewish Church being so singularly interwoven with it. In the narrative the one, as it were, stands over against the other: "Many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven. *But* the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness." Then what an encouragement to the Christian Church: only come to Jesus in humility, in faith; recognise in Him the Commander and Leader of your ranks, and all your servants in His gate

shall be healed in the selfsame hour. "The Lord is with thee, thou mighty man of valour," but not with those whom judicial punishment may have overtaken, as the body then about to be cast out by Him.

The miracle of healing the daughter of the woman of Canaan was another sermon in the ministry of Christ, to make manifest the efficacy and vitality of faith in Himself. He had been reproofing the scribes and Pharisees for breaking the commandments of God, and substituting their own traditions in their stead: "Every plant which my Heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up. Let them alone: they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch." (Matt. xv.) The ever-impulsive Peter would have the parable explained, and when the Divine Teacher had done so, by showing what defiled really meant, He further instructed them in the true nature of their ministry by this miracle. We are not apt scholars in the school of Christ, although He took such pains to expose, and to expel what was wrong; sinful on the one hand, and slow to set forth in Divine reality what we are to follow on the other. "Then Jesus went thence, and departed into the coasts of Tyre and Sidon. And behold a woman of Canaan came out of the same coasts, and cried unto Him, saying, Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou Son of David: my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil." If we would call things by their right names, every human infirmity, mental and physical, might be traced to the devil: disease, confusion, sin, death, all spiritual diseases are just this,—

"Grievously vexed with a devil." Christ had been teaching; "Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries; fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies;" and *then* this miracle was just a *revelation* of "the mystery of iniquity," and a *revelation* of Jesus Himself, the Healer and Life of His people. Sin is a disease. Foul, deep, and without His interference hell would be bottomless, ever deepening, ever widening; but He comes with the key, enters the "great gulf," probes its depth, stanches its wound, binds Satan; unbinds his captives, and lets the prisoners go free. But those who think that sin is to be slurred over,—that He is an Intercessor before the throne of His Father a cloak for sin,—make a terrible mistake. As of an individual, so of a body, God "will reprove the world of sin," till all believe in Christ; and come to be *healed* by Him: "Of sin, because they believe not in me."

"But he answered her not a word." We have seen in the case of Martha and Mary, that the silence of Jesus is no proof of His anger, but of His love; and here His gracious design was to exhibit this woman's faith. He knew it to be vital, genuine, deep; He knew it to be strong enough, and vigorous enough, and *scriptural* enough to wait, to suffer silence as long as He should see fit to be silent; and He would exhibit that faith to his disciples.

"And his disciples came and *besought* him, saying, Send her away; for she crieth after us." Mark well here, the depth of *wickedness* of these disciples: *besought*—I suppose supplicated—Christ to revoke the order of His great com-

mission: their *pride*,—"She crieth after *us*." She had cried, "O Lord, thou son of David," and not after them: and their cruelty, their selfishness, "Send her away," she *annoys us*. Were not these the evil thoughts, blasphemies, which He was endeavouring to set forth? "These ~~are~~ the things which defile a man." Unworthy servants of such a Master, Redeemer, Friend, Brother! Oh, if we knew ourselves as well as He knows us! And He not only knew human nature, how to portray it in its true, fallen, deeply-degenerated state; but He knew how to deal with it, and to contrast it over against His own high, holy, and exalted nature: "He answered and said, I am not sent but unto the ~~lost~~ sheep of the house of Israel." What a rebuke was this to those who were professing to follow Him! And what an encouragement to the believing Canaanitish woman: she received in a moment the implied invitation; her soul caught, as it were, the spirit of His doctrine and of His Gospel, and she rushed to His feet: "Then came she, and worshipped him: saying, Lord, help me." Would this faith, this still more urgent supplication, this fervency of spirit obtain for her her request? Would the Sent One to the lost sheep of the house of Israel longer keep silence? Yes. Still, silence in not granting her request; and more still, silence to exhibit again her faith: "He answered and said, It is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it to dogs." It was not now only the faith of this woman which Christ would manifest to those who had shown themselves to be so unworthy of His service, of the high commission upon which

they, too, were sent ; but He would also exhibit to them the *heart* of the *stranger*, whose sensibility they had so deeply wounded, so ruthlessly lacerated. He would show them how alive she was to her position, as one "without" the pale of the family of God, how her soul had received that truth, and how willing she was to admit it without faltering ; He would teach them, too, what a subdued, humble, delicate, vigorous, elevated soul dwelt in the alien they would have thrust from the Divine Presence, and from the privileges of the true Church of Christ, of which heaven had intrusted them with the keys and the authority to admit her thereto. "She said, Truth, Lord : yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their master's table." Here is no plea of superiority set up, no denial of herself as "unclean." The dog was an unclean animal under the law (Deut. xxiii. 18 ; Rev. xii. 15) ; and she admitted herself to be unclean. The claim of the unclean was what she set up ; the sovereign mercy and alms promised to the unclean. Then the Master's purpose was answered. When He had thus set forth the triumph He had obtained, He proceeded to reward her faith, to bestow the sovereign omnipotent healing so perseveringly sought after, and so confidently believed in : "O woman, great is thy faith : be it unto thee even as thou wilt. And her daughter was made whole from that very hour." Still it was very long before *Peter* could believe in the calling of the Gentile world, before he could be made to hear the voice, "God is no respecter of persons." "What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common." Has Peter ever yet heard that voice ?

The miracle of healing the lunatic son, is one of very important teaching. It lucidly sets forth to us the truth that all our spiritual infirmities and enemies may be overcome by faith and prayer, by daily sitting at the feet of Jesus to be healed. He, with the disciples, had come down from the mount of Transfiguration : He had told them that Elias, in the person of John the Baptist, had come already ; and we know that they were both representatives of a more spiritual economy, of that Divine power by which alone we can overcome the world, the flesh, and the devil ; and then we read,—“ There came to him a man, kneeling down to him, and saying, Lord, have mercy on my son : for he is lunatic, and sore vexed : for oftentimes he falleth into the fire, and oft into the water.” (Matt. xvii. 15.)

I do not deny that this son was insane, mad. To explain away our Lord's miracles is not my design ; but I must maintain that the evil spirit working in the children of disobedience had been the origin of that state, and had led on to that consummation of lunacy in which the father brought him to Christ to be healed. “ Jesus rebuked the devil ;” the devil here, means the evil ; therefore we see, evil is the devil ; and the devil, evil. “ And he departed out of him : and the child was cured from that very hour.” We call things by their wrong names ; but the devil is really the cause of all the insanity by which we are surrounded, of whatever sort or degree it may be. Do we not see persons daily thus diseased, thus possessed,—oftentimes falling into the fire of temper, of passionate resolve, to do their neighbour evil ; of murder for

the love of money, of secret murder from hatred ; into the fire of cowardly action, from pride, from envy, from jealousy ? A proud, ambitious man often casts himself into the fire of hell in seeking his own glorification ; and he would thrust there the most humble, sincere, and earnest Christian rather than renounce his purpose. " In honour preferring one another," is no part of his practice.

" And oft into the water," into the cold water-floods of strife. " Quench not the Spirit ;" but do we not both quench and grieve the Spirit by strife ? " He called the name of the place Massah and Meribah," which mean strife. " They tempted the Lord, saying, Is the Lord among us or not ? " (Exod. xvii. 7.) " This is the water of Meribah ; because the children of Israel strove with the Lord." (Num. xx. 13.) Oh, why should we name our high places Massah and Meribah ? Why should we oftentimes fall into the fire and into the water ? Perhaps there is not a greater bane to the community at large than an intemperate man. He is like this lunatic son, oft falling into the fire, and oft into the water. " He that hath no rule over his own *spirit*, is like a city that is broken down, and without walls."

" And I brought him to thy disciples, and they could not cure him." (Matt. xvii. 16.) This should not be so with the disciples of Christ. Their holy vocation is to cure ; and if they are themselves healed, and ministering humbly in the Divine unction of their holy office, there is not any disease they may not cure, where judicial death has not overtaken the temple of the man of sin.

"Then Jesus answered and said, O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you? bring him hither to me. And Jesus rebuked the devil; and he departed out of him." Oh, what an Omnipotent mandate, miracle was this! Who will tell us that it was not the work of God? "If I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God is come unto you." There was no admixture of evil nature in the Divine Being to which Satan could reply. . The command was peremptory, and the devil obeyed. Not so in the disciples. He almost seemed to confront them, as he did the exorcists of old: "Jesus I know, and Paul I know, but who are ye?"

"Then came the disciples to Jesus *apart*, and said, Why should not we cast him out?" Oh, let the disciples,—they who call themselves His disciples now,—go to Him apart, and ask in sincerity, concealing nothing, "Why could not we cast him out?" Let them lay open their pride to Him,—all their sins, and diseases, whatsoever they may be,—and then cast, confessing their weakness and their failures, "Why could not we cast him out?"

"Jesus said unto them, Because of your unbelief: for verily I say unto you, if ye have faith as a grain of mustard-seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it should remove: and nothing shall be impossible unto you. Howbeit this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting." Doubtless, in saying this, the Preacher pointed to one of the mountains in the grand range of scenery round about Jerusalem; but to understand Him we must pass

from the literal to the thing signified : and I think this mountain here signifies the personality of Satan, as the same metaphor is employed in Scripture to represent the person of Christ. (Dan. ii. 35, 45 ; Rev. viii. 8.) And hence it is written, "Who art thou, O great mountain ? Before Zerubabel thou shalt become a plain." (Zech. iv. 7.) "Behold, I will make thee a new sharp threshing instrument having teeth : thou shalt thresh the mountains, and beat them small, and shalt make the hills as chaff. Thou shalt fan them, and the wind shall carry them away, and the whirlwind shall scatter them : and thou shalt rejoice in the Lord, and shalt glory in the Holy One of Israel." (Isa. xli. 15, 16.) The metaphor of a mountain is employed in Scripture both to represent the Personality of Christ and of the devil. So I believe of the *whole* of Revelation, we may leave the figure, and read the thing signified ; leave the natural world, and pass into the spiritual, even into the kingdom of God. And so of "this mountain." We have read, "Jesus rebuked the devil ; and he departed out of him : and the child was cured." And then, in explaining to the disciples why they could not cast him out, He said, "Because of your unbelief." Who can explain the life of faith ? Who can leave the outer world, and dwell in that which is within ourselves : "The kingdom of God is within you." Who can leave the outer world, and sit in faith at the feet of Jesus till they see that world, that "great mountain become a plain ?" Who can leave the natural world, and live, and breathe, and grow in "the Spirit," in "the Spirit of Truth," in "the kingdom of

God!" And be contented therein: rejoice therein? This is faith: this is to cast out the devil. Then there remains nothing more "impossible unto you." One step more, and the soul and spirit "in Christ" here (Rom. xii. 5; xvi. 7; 1 Cor. iii. 1; 2 Cor. v. 17; xii. 2), are then one in Him in heaven. (1 Cor. xv. 18; Eph. i. 10; 1 Thess. iv. 16.) O faithful followers of your risen Head, go to Him again apart, and say, "Why could not we cast him out?" And He will not only tell you why you could not, but He will tell you also how you can. "Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of Hosts." "Stand still, and see the salvation of God." This is to cast out the devil; this is to live by faith. "And this is the victory that overcometh the world, our faith." Oh, why do not our mountains fall? Why do difficulties multiply upon us? Why is not the prince of this world cast out? Just this—because the disciples of Christ are working with him, instead of against him: they are "living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another." (Titus iii. 3.) Pride, selfishness, vain glory, and love of supremacy, all go on to foster the Evil One, and he is not cast out. "Hear this word, ye kine of Bashan, that are in the mountain of Samaria, which oppress the poor, which crush the needy." (Amos iv. 1.) "Howbeit, this kind goeth not out, but by prayer and fasting." Christ did not mean here, by abstaining from necessary sustenance for the body, but by secret prayer and abstaining from the leaven of sin. (Matt. vi. 15—18; 1 Cor. v. 6—8.) And if *His disciples* do not thus fast now, "the bridegroom will be taken from them, and then will they fast."

Whatever the nature of the evil may be, whatever the character of the disease—blindness, deafness, leprosy, lunacy, mountains of sin, death, still the standard of the Cross always carries the same inscription ;—" Said I not unto thee, if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God ? "

The ninth chapter of St. Matthew is one of miracles. Christ curing a man sick of the palsy is the first of these. Mark well the prescription given by the Physician, " Jesus said unto the sick of the palsy, Son, be of good cheer ; thy *sins be forgiven thee.*"

And again : " A woman, which was diseased with an issue of blood twelve years, came behind him, and touched the hem of his garment : for she said within herself, If I may but touch his garment, I shall be whole. But Jesus turned him about, and when He saw her, He said, Daughter, be of good comfort ; thy faith *hath made thee whole.* And the woman was made whole from that hour." There is in this miracle a singular feature, which I do not know of recorded in any other ; it was performed without a word, without any active means employed by Christ ; the woman, as it were, by faith merged into life, health, and peace. Do we know what it is, day by day, to touch the hem of His garment, and to merge into these ? to live by faith ? Do we know what it is to ride over the billows and surges of time by faith ? to steer the frail, oft failing bark across the sea of life by faith ? No voice from Jesus, no mandate from His lips, no active employment of His power ; but He knows that virtue is gone out of Him, and He turns and says, " Thy faith hath made

the whole; go in peace." (Luke viii. 48.) These are the exhibitions of His *glory*.

And again, "They brought to him a *dumb man possessed with a devil*. And when the *devil was cast out*, the *dumb spoke*." We see from these miracles not only the union of spiritual and physical nature, but we see, too, how the restitution of both are to go hand in hand; when the devil is cast out, the earth will wake up into primeval health.

The miracle of raising to life the son of the woman of Nain is full of human and godlike compassion, and this feature of it strikes us as more sublime, although less doctrinal, than a prompt response to an open confession of faith.

We do not read of one word from the widowed, weeping mother; not one cry for help, not one supplication for mercy of the God-man, who was passing by; her sorrow was too deep, too real, too poignant, and, as she thought, too hidden from mortal ken to hope for, or seek relief. Much people of the city was there to witness her cruel loss, to behold her unmitigated grief; but not a word even of sympathy might do violence to her sorrow, as the mournful procession moved on to the unclean place without the gates of the city, to the place prepared for the ruin of nature, for the house destroyed by ruin and sin by him who had the power of death—that is the devil. But although all human aid failed for the silent mourner; although the grave was open to receive its prey; and although all human resource stood aghast and helpless before the wreck which the King of Terrors had despoiled of life; and although all was silent as the grave before the

ghostly reality which filled the widowed and then motherless heart with affliction and with despair: still He who was the resurrection and the life; He who had the key of death; who already in virtue of His great work was the victor over death, the grave, sin, and hell; He in His Divine power and knowledge, in His own silent and omnipotent grandeur was passing by. "And when the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her, and said unto her, Weep not." (Luke vii.)

" This was compassion like a God ;
For though He felt, and knew,
The cost of life, to be His life,
His pity ne'er withdrew."

"And he came and touched the bier. And he said, Young man, I say unto thee, Arise. And he that was dead sat up, and began to speak. And he delivered him to his mother." Still, not one word from her who was the second time made the mother of a living son. It is a proverb, "Words are silver, silence is gold;" and her silence tells us more of the deep emotion of her soul than words could have done. Doubtless the sudden revulsion of feeling, the sudden reaction of physical nature, would have cost her much, had it not been controlled by Him who had turned darkness into light, and the black shadow of death into the morning.

The miracle of giving sight to two blind men was one to evidence the gifts of God in answer to faith. "Believe ye that I am able to do this? They said unto him, Yea, Lord. Then touched he their eyes, saying, According to your faith be it unto you. And their eyes were opened." (Matt. ix. 28.)

These are only a few of the miracles in the ministry of Christ; but as we glance at them, have they not the same effect upon us which they had upon those who witnessed them? "There came a great fear on all: and they glorified God, saying, That *God hath visited* his people." (Luke vii. 16.) Do we not see in them that sin is the cause of *all* physical disease and derangement of whatever sort it be, that "the law of sin" worketh death? "Thy sins be forgiven thee," was health. (Matt. ix. 2.) "When the devil was gone out," was health. (ix. 33.) When the blind men believed that Jesus was the Omnipotent Lord, it was to them sight: "According to your faith be it unto you." When the woman believed that by touching Christ she should be whole, she was whole. "Thy faith hath made thee whole." Then what do we learn from these cases? That Christ was God. He alone of all who ever appeared in our world went to the root, to the seat of disease—sin, and healed *that*. Lunacy, palsy, leprosy, blindness, deafness, possessed of the devil, were all, just the development of sin. To depart from the holiness of God is sin, and unstanch'd sin is death. Then I say the miracles of Christ evidenced the God, because He stanch'd the issue, and it ceased to flow; He destroyed the worm which dieth not itself, and the dead arose. (John xi.; Matt. xxvii. 52, 53.) He quenched the fire of hell in the bosom of those who heard Him, and they had peace: "Go in peace." Then I repeat, the third time, that the miracles of Christ evidenced the God.

Tell me not of the education of the world. "God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham." Tell me not that the miracles of Christ were not miracles, but simply the operation of some physical law still unknown to us, but to be explained by science. Oh, I say, tell me not these, as some bold blaspheming philosophers of the Christian Church tell us, thereby denying Christ; but tell me what God in Christ tells me: "The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For they that are *after the flesh* do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally-minded is death; but to be spiritually-minded is *life and peace*. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So, then, they that are in the flesh cannot please God. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. If Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you. Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye *through the Spirit*

to mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." (Rom. viii.) Oh, what an antidote to sin, to death, and to the grave is this ! Oh, what a compendium of the doctrine of life is this ! Let the fleshly dreamers who are seeking after a law whereby they may turn everything into gold ; whereby the world may be educated, sin arrested ; who are expecting to find a physical law whereby the world's misery may be stanch'd ; oh, I say, let these alchemists cease from their labour : "Come unto me, all ye that labour ; come, and ye shall find rest unto your souls."

The chapter in Romans, from which I have quoted, is so much to the point upon this subject, every word of it is so fraught with light, life, and miraculous resurrection life, that I would say to all who are really seeking to be healed, who are saying, "we have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost," I would say to them, read it again,—*labour* to find, to come into contact with "the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus." Look honestly, with a clear, intelligent scrutiny into the diseases of your hearts, and then receive the Divine unction, the omnipotent touch which can make you whole. "The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus." This always strikes me as one of the most full, ample, legal, and philosophical laws of gravitation towards heaven that has ever been discovered. Oh, that the world would move on under this law of motion ! I am sure our errant orb would soon right itself in the orbits of the spheres ; that our earth

would soon blend with heaven ; that the opening words of this grand chapter would very soon be seen graven upon her arched dome, "There is therefore *now* no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus."

"Well, then, the miracles of Christ evidence the God. His *glory* lighted up the "great gulf" of sin to its lowest depth ; His glory made null the law of sin there ; His glory abolished death ; His glory purchased life : "Like as Christ was raised from the dead by the *glory* of the Father." "Having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear."

But it may be said, there have been many others in the Church who have performed miracles ; therefore the miracles of Christ did not evidence the God. They did not do it by their own glory, but by His : "Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by him doth this man stand here before you whole." (Acts iv. 10.) "Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through thy name." (Luke x. 17.)

Elijah was a representative, a type of a more spiritual age ; and he performed the miracle of raising the child to life by the Spirit of God ; or, rather, the Spirit of God performed the miracle, employing Elijah as his instrument ; therefore, as the life of Christ was the price to restore the Eternal Spirit to our world, He was really the restorer, and the "resurrection life" of the child : "The Lord heard the voice of Elijah ; and the

soul of the child came into him again." St. Paul tells us, it is "the Spirit of God through Christ dwelling in us," who is our Intercessor. (Rom. viii. 26.) So it is clear that it was the Spirit of God through Christ in Elijah, who raised the child.

I have only to notice one more phase of the miracles of Christ, and I shall leave the subject. "There came a fear on all: and they glorified God, saying that a great *prophet* is risen up among us." (Luke vii. 16.) Then let us beware how we reject the prophetic meaning of His miracles. I believe, in the long roll of ages of the world's history, the prophetic meaning of the mind of the Spirit will be laid open, and subserve His purpose as the necessity of the Church may require.

But I cannot refrain from observing one point more, and that is, in the resurrection of the body. What will the state of those be who have not been delivered from the bondage of Satan and of corruption? I suppose the body will rise in the climax of developed sin in which it fell, and that not more of the spiritual than of the physical disorder. Our world must be to God as a great hospital, groaning under the curse: "The whole earth groaneth and travaileth." But what will the great gulf of despair be, wherein will be the palsied, the leper, the paralytic, the lunatic, the dumb, the lame, the deaf, the blind, the mad, the tortured with racking disease,—all with every disease of which they died? And, added to this, the flames of eternal justice devouring

the soul; the flame of unpardoned sin torturing the soul, and added to all this, the further condemnation and damnation for rejecting Christ: "He that believeth not shall be damned." Will not this be hell? Was not Christ "a great prophet" when He said,—when He again and again proclaimed to a lost world, "there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth?" (Matt. viii. 12; xiii. 42, 50; xxii. 18; xxiv. 51; xxv. 30; Luke xiii. 28.)

Still, I am afraid I have treated the subject of hell less fearfully than I should. It is not because I do not believe there is to be no end of punishment, that I would for a moment lessen the awfulness of the lost state. The Divine ransom, and its infinite sovereign prerogative does not lessen the damage done; but we should look at the one in its illimitable extent, and at the other in its awful depth, and then we shall rightly estimate the one, and fear the other. So far from lessening the scriptural view of the lost state, I am awestruck as I look into the burning depth! Before leaving this subject let us look down into it once more, as the gulf's mouth is left open to us in the closing record of revealed truth?

We read in Revelation (xix. 20) the beast and the false prophet were both cast alive into a lake of fire, burning with brimstone. This beast and false prophet are the whole body of the lost; the devil, and they one with him; for when it is written, "prepared for the devil and his angels" (Matt. xxv. 41), it means his evil spirits, who, in men, have served

in here. There are some passages which would almost lead us to hope that the fire here spoken of is the torment of conscience: enlightened, but still under the curse, under divine wrath, under a consciousness of sin unforgiven, under penalty of the Divine law, under the fire of eternal justice. Lev. viii. 8; Jonah ii. 2; Ps. xvi. 10; xviii. 13; lv. 15; vi. 3.) And the rich man in hell communing with God, represented in the flesh (Luke xvi.); and the hell so solemnly foretold by Christ to His disciples (in Mark ix. and the thirty-fourth verse) is hell in the flesh; the hell of enlightened conscience brought under condemnation for transgression spirit of the Divine law. But (and I would say it most reverently and solemnly, that as the whole of Revelation is metaphorical, and real, figurative, and literal) may not this fire, be figurative and literal, true, real? figurative in this life the literal hereafter? Let us look again at the Divine word? "I saw an angel come down from heaven, having a key of the bottomless pit, and a great *chain* in his hand." This key is the insignia of the power of Christ as conqueror; and the chain, of His supremacy, both as Judge and Lord of all. "And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years. And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him." We have said the whole body of the lost are included herein. Then, I say again, I am awestruck as I look into this gulf, as I see the burning lava, the fiery glare of the craters of our earth! They are to me very

suggestive of this mouth of hell; they may be the mouth of hell,—the volume of fire in the interior of our earth, hell. God said, “Though they dig into hell.” How long was that abode in preparation for the devil and his angels? “Prepared!”—the word should strike us,—“before the mountains were *settled*.” How many myriads of ages may it have taken to *settle* the granite walls of the place prepared for the damned? “When he set a compass upon the face of the depth. While as yet he had not made the highest part of the dust of the world.” Read this chapter, and see how it tells us of preparation. (Prov. viii.) Geologist, do not let your science make you incredulous! “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.” Christ used the same word to His disciples: “I go to prepare a place for you.” And notice, further: “shut him up.” (Rev. xx. 3.) The craters of a renovated earth may be closed; not a voice from hell heard, not a shadow of hell left upon it: “shut him up!” Oh, awful thought! The portals of the everlasting mountains close upon the realm of darkness: “The earth with her bars was about me for ever.” (Jonah ii. 6.) Oh, let us say with David,—“Let not the pit shut her mouth upon me!” And again, “set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more.” This seal may be the restored earth, set upon the mouth of hell; the seal of the Spirit’s work, which could not be removed till the thousand years of millennial glory were over. “When the thousand years are expired Satan shall be loosed out of his prison.” It may be the

o have enjoyed a millennial reign with Christ, will up to a higher beatitude, to a third, or a seventh or they are sealed, "Blessed ;" and that when they ed, our earth will be again a scene of warfare : "Satan osed out of his prison." But it will be to be restored : re down from God out of heaven, and devoured them. devil that deceived them was cast into a lake of rimstone." Then we read of the Day of Judgment, signment of the lost into prolonged punishment, of ven and a new earth. How many myriads of ages ks of the Almighty may occupy, we do not know ; ld say, if I have confessed my belief in the final i of all things, still I would have it clearly under- : I believe also in a hell literal, real ; and of an ature of torment far beyond our power of con-

us be more humble, more holy, more in earnest, ful about our own salvation, and more truly con- the salvation of others ! Oh, let us not trifle with pool which is engulfing multitudes—with that vortex called hell ! but let us go to Jesus now. He is make whole all, of whatsoever disease they have. ad of envy, and envying one another, instead of self- on, arrogance, love of distinction, and vainboasting, n winding up of this chapter on miracles, His own imposing call to earnestness and to duty, go with us l of our days : "When he saw the multitudes, he

was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd. Then saith he unto his disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few ; pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest." (Matt. ix. 36—38.)

O God, give us grace to be crucified, that our Redeemer may be all and in all, that we may rise in resurrection life with Him : that bodies may be redeemed from sin, disease, and death : and that souls may be saved from hell ! " God wrought special miracles by the hands of Paul."

CHAPTER VII.

CHRIST'S MINISTRY.

leaving the subject of our Saviour's ministry, I must
other phases of it. His conversation with Nicodemus
to present itself as one of the most important of all his
ns. In opening the subject-matter of it here, I would
e first, and wish it to be particularly observed, because
it hinges the very great importance of the whole con-
tion, that the disquisition or problem at issue between
to Rabbies was particularly, if not exclusively, teaching.
has not been an age in the Church since that memo-
and vital, and systematic inquiry into truth, in which
as not been employed in trying to solve still fur-
the doctrine and arguments of the great Teacher there
th. The subject having thus occupied the Church as
, it may appear a bold attempt for me to venture upon
ad a field of inquiry, but my interpretation of the oft-
ed text will be so simple, and I trust so scriptural, that
sure it will not offend, if it does not convince. I have
since that *vital* inquiry into truth; yes, for the teaching
is a *vital* one, "The words that I speak unto you are

spirit, and they are life : the word that liveth ;" therefore let us seek and receive the vitality of the subject, and not the typical element, and the dead letter only.

Nicodemus was of the sect of the Pharisees, and a ruler of the Jews ; that is, a senator of the Sanhedrim ; and this was why he came to Jesus by night, because he feared that Council of the nation knowing it. It is said, he was afterwards deposed from that dignity for professing openly the religion of Christ. From our Saviour calling him " a master in Israel " it is evident he was a doctor of ecclesiastical law, as well as one of the Council of Seventy ; or rather, I should say as member of that Council he was both. It is also said, he was a cousin of Gamaliel, who was also an eminent doctor of the law, and is thought to have embraced Christianity after the death of Christ ; and as we read his address to that Council (Acts v. from the 34th verse), we understand how it should be so. It is also further said, that after Nicodemus was deposed from office, he took him to his country house, and maintained him till he died. There is still extant an Apocryphal Gospel under the name of Nicodemus. I mention all this the better to understand the eager, abrupt introduction of himself into the presence of Jesus, and the still more precipitate manner in which he addressed Him. Without a moment of introductory discourse, he at once opened the subject of *teaching*, the one so near to his heart, as professor of Divine law. " Rabbi, we know that thou art a *teacher* come from God : for no man can do these miracles

which thou doest, except God be with him." Nicodemus here opens a vast subject; he connects the teaching of Jesus with the miracles He wrought, as though one was the result of the other, and doubtless this was so. "Faith cometh by hearing." He taught the people: this induced faith, and then by that faith in Him they were healed of whatever diseases they had. Perhaps Nicodemus had seen Christ in the temple, "sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them and asking them questions." Perhaps he had heard His sermon on the Mount, when He taught as one having authority, and not as the scribes. Perhaps he had heard Him teaching to the multitudes from city to city, and witnessed the miracles which He did, which, as I have said, were all the result of belief in the things which He taught; it was this result which seemed to strike Nicodemus, and hence this first express address, so much and at once to the point: "Rabbi, we know that thou art a *teacher* come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him." The great Teacher saw in a moment the drift of the argument, and solved the complex, duplex problem, as promptly as it had been propounded: "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God." It will be asked, what had this to do with teaching? Here is a difficulty; it was the very difficulty of the problem at issue, and Nicodemus found himself at once drawn deep into the question he had come to have solved, because the miracles which Christ wrought were first

healing, then health and spiritual life, and these were the result of faith in Him, through the power of His teaching. "Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter the second time into his mother's womb and be born?" Here we find a doctor of the law of Moses, a master in Israel perfectly ignorant of spiritual life. Oh, how is the truth established! "The letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life."

Jesus answered, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be *born* of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God." The disputed question of two thousand years now arises, What is here meant by "born of water, and of the Spirit?" This water does not signify baptismal water, that is only the ceremonial or ritual law, to shadow forth the thing here signified. Water and Spirit mean here what John meant when he said, "He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, *and* with fire." (Matt. iii. 11.) "There appeared unto them cloven tongues, like as of fire; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost." (Acts ii. 3, 4.) The *vital* element of the Inspired Word is what is intended. God is incarnate in the Word; it is endued with life. "The Word was God." Just as the Sacred Writings were laid up in the sacred Ark, the mercy-seat put thereon, and there the Divine Presence rested between the cherubims, so we find in that remarkable vision of cherubims and of coals of fire, in Ezek. chapters i. and x.; which cherubims mean an order of angels in heaven, the representatives of the Word, as the

whole Body of the Church is seen represented there. (Rev. x. 1.) I say, just as the Divine Presence rested between the cherubims in the tabernacle and in the temple, so we find the Eternal Spirit to be the Incarnate Being in the cherubims in Ezekiel; and in the four wheels (chap. i.), which mean, too, the *working Word*.

The fire taken from between the cherubims, even from between the wheels (x. 2; i. 21), explains to us the meaning of the element of life in the Inspired Word of God, being compared to fire in the New Testament. "Within the oracle I made two cherubims." (1 Kings vi. 23.) The Bible is our holy oracle. In the Ark thou shalt put the *testimony* that I shall give thee, and I will commune with thee from above the mercy-seat, from between the two cherubims which are upon the Ark of the *testimony*. (Exod. xxv. 21, 22; Num. vii. 89.)

"Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel, thou that leadest Joseph like a flock: thou that dwellest between the cherubims, shine forth!" (Ps. lxxx. 1.) "The Lord reigneth; let the people tremble: he sitteth between the cherubims; let the earth be moved." (Ps. xcix. 1.) And as we see the Incarnate God of these cherubims throughout the Apocalypse (iv. 9; v. 6-14; vi. 1; vii. 11; xiv. 3; xix. 4), we understand how He reigns upon the earth, how the people tremble and the earth is moved when He speaks from them, that is, when the Spirit of the Word of prophecy is sent forth. "By fire and by his sword will the Lord plead with all flesh: and the

slain of the Lord shall be many." "I will make my words in thy mouth fire." It was this fire of the living Word which was to be cast over the world, till the earth was lightened with the *glory* of the Lord. (Ezek. x. 4.)

As fire is the element of the Inspired Word, so is water, or, I should rather say, they are the symbols by which the life of the Word, "the Spirit of Truth," is set forth to us. Fire to purify, water to cleanse, to sanctify, to sustain an element of life. But how shall I distinguish between this life and the baptism of the Spirit? "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit." "He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire." Is it because we eat bread and drink water that we do not want the pure air, the atmosphere we breathe? This, as I shall show you later, is Christ's own argument in this profound disquisition on truth: I shall, therefore, notice first what is meant by being born of water, and then by being born of the Spirit. I think the reference to water is to the laver of the tabernacle, which was for Aaron and his sons to wash in. (Exod. xxx. 18—20, 21; xxxviii. 8.) And to the molten sea of the temple, which, too, was expressly for the priests and Levites (2 Chron. iv.); they were types of "the Spirit of Truth," in which they were themselves to wash, and of that truth which was to be set forth by them, that the people too might be cleansed in that same molten sea of Divine truth. Let us look at this phase of the subject at issue. To be born again of the water of life, of the vital element of the Inspired Volume: "Being *born again*, not of

ruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever. The word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the Gospel is preached unto you." (1 Pet. i. 23—25.) "Now ye are *clean* through the word which I have spoken unto you." (1 John xv. 3.) And in that sublime prayer of Christ for His disciples in the seventeenth chapter, His rejoicing before His Father was that they had then Revelation: "I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me." "Holy Father, I have given them thy word. Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth." And so in His conversation with the woman of Samaria, this same doctrine of water is brought, "If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked him, and he would have given thee living water." (John iv.) *Instruction* in the doctrine of Christ is the water here intended, "The water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life." And so He said again, "He that believeth on me, out of his belly shall *flow* rivers of living water" (vii. 38), evidently meaning, *channels* of life to others through making known the same doctrine. This is the water which St. John says bears witness on the earth (1 Epistle v. 8); it is the Incarnate God of the Father springing into life in the hearts of men, "Except a man be born of this water, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." "Of the Spirit being born again of the word of God, which liveth." "Of His own will begat he us with the word of truth." (James

i. 18.) This is now the tangible water, the tangible element of life in our world, that which comes within our power of receiving, within the faculties of the soul; within the power of the five senses of the soul and of the body too, "Christ hath given Himself for us as an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling *savour*." (Eph. v. 2.) "We are unto God a sweet *savour* of Christ." (2 Cor. ii. 15.) "If the salt have lost its *savour*." (Matt. v. 13.) And to show; further, how the life of God in Christ is fire to condemn sin in us, bread and water to feed the soul; *savour*, quality, the element of our spiritual state, He added, "Every one shall be salted with fire. Have salt in yourselves, and have *peace* one with another." (Mark ix. 50.) May God never say to us, "I will not smell the *savour* of your sweet odours." Then what encouragement is there to sow the seed of life in childhood; it is incorruptible, it liveth. How safe and how sure is national education upon the foundation of the Scripture of Truth; it is water springing up into everlasting life; but what a delusion of the devil is it to tell us God will work without his Word, that the world never can be saved by the foolishness of preaching; that the field is too vast, the labour hopeless, the thing impossible! God has endued *all* His ordinances and *all* His institutions with life; the means are equal to the end, and He will never abrogate one, nor ever suffer one to become void till they have accomplished His design. And how dangerous, too, is it to rest in the symbol, and to despise the spiritual significance, to seize the

and to lose the substance, to believe in baptismal
 tion, and not to see the necessity of the new birth by
 of the Inspired Word. "All power is given unto me
 en and in earth. Go ye, *therefore*, and *teach* all
 baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of
 and of the Holy Ghost: *Teaching* them to observe all
 whatsoever I have commanded you." (Matt. xxviii.
 ere are both the water of the Word, and the Spirit.
 ht in the same way trace the bread of life, the Divine
 of the sacred volume, the first principle of spiritual
 nourishment of the soul, its vigour, and its strength;
 w references are enough to establish the doctrine of
 er this symbol. (John vi. 33, 48—63; Prov. ix.

et us inquire, further, the meaning of the text,
 a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot
 to the kingdom of God." Why the repetition?
 the distinction? What is the metaphysical distinc-
 veen God "The Spirit of Truth," the Incarnate God
 ible, and the God, the Supreme Being? They are
 the same Being, but how or why distinct in office I
 now, more than I know how or why the Father, Son,
 y Ghost are distinct in office, yet one God; but here
 e distinction and the agreement of being "born of
 d of the Spirit." "Christ Jesus, who of God is made
 wisdom." (1 Cor. i. 30.) And may I say, Christ
 ho of God is made unto us God? This is the distinc-

tion and the agreement of being born of water and of the Spirit,—“Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.” (John i. 13.) “Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ, is *born of God*” (1 Epistle v. 1); “Whatsoever is *born of God* overcometh the world.” (v. 4.) St. Peter, in the most striking manner, elucidates this doctrine of birth by water and blood. “Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious *promises*: that *by these* ye might be partakers of the divine nature.” There is then the birth by the Word, growth by grace, glory by promise. This appears to be an intelligent acceptance of life.

I do not deny baptismal regeneration, inasmuch as every ordinance of God is endued with life; but I do most positively deny that the child is “born again” of the natural element of water: it is born again of “the Holy Spirit of promise,” if dedicated and consecrated in faith and holy purpose, and if that holy purpose and vow to God be performed by the parents to the child *wholly*, truly, and faithfully; just as when God made promise to Abraham, the Church was regenerated if she walked according to all His holy commandments. “Because he could swear by no greater, he swore by himself;” and then that promise was God, “The Word was God.” But the unfaithfulness and inability of the creature to serve God as we ought, tell us that the wording of the baptismal service is most dangerous, and open to the most fearful perversion and abuse; in short, administered

nationally, indiscriminately, thoughtlessly, and loosely, as it is by our Church, it becomes to multitudes a damning heresy, an utter fallacy. At the christening of my own children, I always withdraw my mind from some of the service, and in its stead mutter before the Lord, "When I go into the house of Rimmon, and bow myself in the house of Rimmon, the Lord pardon thy servant for this thing." God is always the same, always faithful; there is no breach of promise with Him but for unfaithfulness; but broken oaths of solemn rites are blasphemy against the Holy Ghost: "sin which never can be forgiven. Read carefully Hebrews x. from the 23d to the 31st verse. It is "despite unto the Spirit of grace." "The promise is made of none effect." Then surely parents are the only proper sponsors for their children, and the vow should never be suffered to be made but by well-instructed, sincere, practical believers. Can we wonder that a large body should rush from, retreat, absolutely, from a precipice so fatal, from a danger so deadly, and go to the other extreme, and not bring their children publicly to God at all? I think this is, too, a fatal error; the ordinance of God is neglected (Gen. xvii. 10—14; Luke ii. 22, 23; xviii. 16), covenant promise discredited, and the child may never come to God who is not very early brought into responsibility with, and for itself before Him. I believe the rite of confirmation, thoroughly, sincerely, and intelligently performed, is the means of salvation to very many. Not that I mean to relieve the parents of responsibility, or to infer that their ministration is not as

fraught with promise and as efficacious as the ministry of the sanctuary. I *know* it is, but they should go hand in hand, "For thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness." If the parental bosom be called early to relinquish its sacred charge, the offspring should find itself duly and safely inducted into the Church, into the bosom of its Mother Church.

But to return to the Divine Teacher and His disciple. "That which is born of flesh is flesh ; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." He said, in the next chapter, to the woman of Samaria, "God is a Spirit." Of that Being we can form no conception only as we see Him in His Son. "In him dwelt all the fulness of the Godhead ;" but in man He dwells but in part ; He comes as the soft zephyr and the passing wind, to cleanse that temple of sin, to cast out the strong man armed who had usurped the throne there ; He comes in light to illumine the dark abode ; He comes an element of life to quicken the fallen ruin, to raise the dead to life, to glory. "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth : so is every one that is born of the Spirit." This Divine teaching is poetical and sublime ; no violence of nature, no audible fiat sent forth, but where the Eternal Spirit *likes*—listeth, He enters to dwell, to reign, and to remain till the soul be transformed to the nature of the God, when it wings its way to be for ever embosomed in its normal state. "Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live."

"Nicodemus answered and said unto him, How can these

things be?" Then came the startling query, the question which probed the doctor of the Mosaic law, the "ruler of the Jews," the "master of Israel," the high dignitary of the Sanhedrim, to the quick: "Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things? If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you of heavenly things?" Knowledge, teaching, were still the points at issue.

No; this teacher of the nation did not know himself, nor was he then prepared to be told how that Temple of light and life, the attributes, and office, and prerogatives of whom they had been discussing, should, in the completion of His operation, enlighten and enfold eternally the holy city of which He then for the first time in His life seemed to have become a part. (Rev. xxi. 22.) Oh, Thou great and glorious Teacher! we come to Thee, as did this disciple of old, to be taught first of earthly and then of heavenly things!

In concluding my remarks upon this remarkable conversation of our Saviour with Nicodemus, I would only say that the laver of the tabernacle and the molten sea of the temple were symbols of the ocean of the Spirit of Truth, "for the priests to wash in;" but under the Christian dispensation, in the full flow of that principle, element, river, ocean of life; when the "partition by the chains of gold before the oracle" are broken down (1 Kings vi. 21), "the middle wall of partition," when the veil of the temple was rent in the midst," then all might draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith, consult the holy Oracle for themselves,

wash in the laver and in the molten sea, and be guiltless ; and thus it was that the Jordan superseded them in its typical signification, still typical ; and thus it was that we find both the symbol and the thing signified in the teaching of Him who was Himself, as the Author of the Bible, the Vessel, Fountain, Cistern, of the purifying waters. "Except ye be born of water, and of the Spirit, ye cannot enter into the kingdom of God." Read carefully the description of that molten sea, in the 1st of Kings, from the twenty-third to the thirty-ninth verse, and you will compass the meaning as a type of the sea of the Spirit of Truth : there are the lions, oxen, and cherubims of Ezekiel's vision, of the four beasts of the Apocalyptic vision ; there are the four wheels of that same vision in Ezekiel, (ch. i.,) signifying, perhaps, the framework of the Four Gospels. "The Lord showed unto me four carpenters." (Zech. i. 20.) Their writings contain the holy waters, which we must first be born of, and then washed in, to be clean. "I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever ;" or, a more correct translation, another Teacher, "even the Spirit of Truth, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things." (John xiv. 16, 17, 26.) Here, teaching and washing are synonymous terms. "I *sanctify myself*, that they also might be sanctified through the truth." (John xvii. 19.) "Christ, through the Eternal Spirit, offered himself without spot to God." The God Incarnate of the Bible told Him He was the sealed Victim, and then that spotless offering became the purchase-price of

the Spirit of Truth for others; and thus it was that He was the light and the life of the world, the water and bread of life. The Divine sustenance of Revelation is the angels' food we so often find laid at our pillows when the journey of life is too great for us. (1 Kings xix. 5—8.)

I do not like abstract theology. It never convinces. Truth must be defined, progressive truth traced, laid open, comprehended before the learned disputants of the Christian Sanhedrim will receive it, and believe in the Author of it. "I am the Truth."

But let us again look for a moment at this doctrine of water and of the Spirit, as Christ taught and exemplified it. In the beginning of the Gospel of St. John, in the second chapter, we find Him turning the water into wine, typical of the material elements of the rites of the sanctuary being endued with life and grace to those who faithfully receive them. The Jewish waterpots of water, after the manner of the purifying of the Jews, in which the transubstantiation took place, tell me this was the meaning of the miracle. I do not think I am a Papist when I say this; all that I maintain is, that the ordinances are endued with "the Spirit of promise," and are thus made life to those who receive them, believing Christ to be the Purchaser of the Spirit, "the Author of" the Redeemer from death.

Then, in the third chapter, occurs the teaching of Nicodemus of the necessity of regeneration by that living water and by Spirit; but the question was not yet set at rest, for, in

the twenty-fifth verse, we read, "Then there arose a question between some of John's disciples and the Jews about *purifying*. John answered and said, A man can receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven." It is not possible to be born again, or to be cleansed by the natural element of water; the gift must be from heaven. "Ye yourselves bear me witness, that I said, I am not the Christ, but that I am sent before him." John was here referring to his own words, "I indeed baptize you with water: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I; he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire." And then again, he said, evidently referring to the marriage in Cana of Galilee, where the water in the water-pots of purification had been made wine, when Christ had said, "Woman, mine hour is not yet come," "He that hath the bride is the bridegroom," signifying that the cleansing water and the sustaining wine were for her till Christ should come to receive her to Himself. And then again, in the fourth chapter, we find the living water as flowing from the Divine Teacher Himself, the Fountain, and springing up into everlasting life in those who receive it, taught to the woman of Samaria; and He wound up the subject by saying, "God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth;" signifying that the life of God He had been insisting the necessity of under the symbol of water, "If thou knewest the gift of God," lay in humble, holy, believing, spiritual worship of God in Christ. If by the means of grace we would receive spiritual life, our

worship must be believing and spiritual; if it be so, all God's institutions are endued with life; if it be not so, we receive only the natural element.

Then, again, in the 5th chapter we find a singular exemplification of the subject, a healing, purifying, cleansing of disease with, by, or *without* the symbolical element at all, as though the Divine Teacher would set the inquiry of the subject at rest by the Divine cure being wrought altogether independent of means.

At Jerusalem, by the sheep market, there was a pool called Bethesda, which meant house of mercy, the root of the word being Bethel—house of God. Notice, this Baptistry was not in the temple, it was not the brazen lava of the tabernacle, not the molten sea of the temple, not the sacred Jordan which superseded them; in the pool was not the cleansed water by sacrifice for the purifying of the Levites (Num. viii.), not the cleansed water by the means of sacrificial blood for the cleansing of the leper and the leprous house (Levit. xiv.), not the purified water by the ashes of the red heifer (Num. xix.); but the consecrated font, the house of mercy, was in the market place; and the house had "*five porches*;"—did they in their stately architecture typify the *five* dispensations of mercy which were then in the future?" "Wisdom hath builded her house, she hath hewn out her *seven* pillars." Our world is now the Temple at Jerusalem. And the rich man who represented the Jewish Church was heard to say, "I have *five* brethren, send to

them, lest they also come into this place of torment." (Luke xvi. 28.) In that typical piazza "lay a great multitude of impotent folk, of blind, halt, withered, waiting for the moving of the water." In these we see the whole Body represented by the beggar, or Lazarus full of sores. "For an angel went down at a certain season into the pool, and troubled the water: whosoever then first after the troubling of the water stepped in, was made whole of whatsoever disease he had." This angel was the Holy Spirit, which descended upon Christ when He was baptized in the Jordan (Matt. iii. 16), the promised blessing to those who should believingly fulfil the ordinance of righteousness; it was not then the water made holy by the typical blood, but by the Spirit of life of the New Covenant, the purchase of the blood of Christ, "Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean." (Ezek. xxxvi. 26.) "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel." (Jer. xxxi. 31—33.) Whenever truth is faithfully preached, the Spirit of God is there to trouble the water, and all who step in will be healed of whatsoever disease they may have; if *truth* be preached, "The Spirit of Truth" is in it.

"And a certain man was there which had an infirmity thirty and eight years. When Jesus saw him lie, and knew that he had been now a long time in that case, he saith unto him, Wilt thou be made whole? The impotent man answered him, Sir, I have no man when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool: but while I am coming another steppeth

down before me." This is very expressive of the impotency of human nature, of its inability to raise itself from its fallen state. And that there should have been none found to help him is very expressive of our want of benevolence and love to each other: not so with Christ; "When he saw the multitudes he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd." (Matt. ix. 36.)

"Jesus saith unto the man, Rise, take up thy bed and walk." Here the cleansing by the typical water, the immersion therein, was dispensed with altogether; Jesus would show the disputants, both John's disciples and the Jews, that the power was not in the water, but in Himself; thus, while He Himself would fulfil all righteousness, and in doing so He received the promised blessing, He would set forth and at last for ever the nice distinction between absolute baptismal regeneration, and the power of God either in it, or without it. (Matt. xxviii. 18, 19.)

"Immediately the man was made whole, and took up his bed, and walked: and on the same day *was the Sabbath.*" It is very remarkable that almost all our Saviour's most important miracles were wrought on the Sabbath, to set forth the doctrine of spiritual healing, the spiritual cures which were to be wrought on that day: "Behold, thou art made whole: sin no more, lest a worse thing come upon thee." Naaman must wash seven times in the typical water before he could be clean: the letter of the law in its strictest sense

must be obeyed ; the impotent man could be cured without the rite of the law being performed at all, and he might by Divine authority carry his bed on the Sabbath, which was not lawful for him to do on that day : " He that made me whole, the same said unto me, Take up thy bed, and walk."

After this, occurred the miracle of feeding five thousand with five loaves and two fishes, and the sermon on the doctrine of the bread of life most admirably and divinely deduced therefrom. (John vi.) And then in the 7th chapter: on the day of the feast of tabernacles, which in the Mosaic law typified an increased number of sanctuaries of God, we find Christ promising to those who should minister therein, that if they believed on Him, out of their belly should flow rivers of living water ; rivers of knowledge, and rivers of life.

It seems almost impossible that I can pass over the doctrine of the new birth, " By the Word of God," (1 Pet. i. 23), without noticing for a moment the parable of the sower and the seed ; it shows us how practical a ministry Christ's was, that vague abstractions had no part in it. (Luke viii.) " A sower went out to sow his seed : and as he sowed, some fell by the way side ; and it was trodden down, and the fowls of the air devoured it." Are there not always byway hearers, those who receive the seed, but the evil of the natural heart devours it ? " And some fell upon a rock ; and as soon as it sprang up it withered away, because it lacked moisture." This is very expressive of the stony heart, which receives no

down, none of the latter or the former rain from heaven. And some fell among thorns ; and the thorns sprang up with it, and choked it. And other fell on good ground, and sprang up, and bare fruit an hundredfold. And when he had said these things he cried, He that hath ears to hear, let him hear. And his disciples asked him, saying, What might this parable be ? And he said, Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the Kingdom of God : but to others in parables ; that seeing they might not see, and hearing they might not understand." This is a very remarkable verse. What are "The mysteries of the Kingdom of God?" The warfare of "The Spirit of Truth" with the Spirit of error and of evil ; and thus it is that we read in the Apocalypse, "Write the mystery of the seven stars" (i. 20), that is, write the deep things of this spiritual warfare. Christ said to his disciples, You know them ; you feel the conflict going on in your own souls, and you understand all I say to you ; but to others I speak in parables, that the revealed word may not add to their condemnation, for I know they will not receive the truth.

"Now the parable is this : *The seed is the Word of God.* Those by the way side are they that hear ; then cometh the devil, and taketh away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved." Thus our Saviour explained, that by "the fowls of the air," He meant the devil. From it we may learn how many evil spirits are hovering above, around about us, to devour the germ of life, lest it should

spring up unto life everlasting. "The prince of the power of the air." "Our name is Legion, for we are many."

"They on the rock are they, which when they hear, receive the word *with joy*; and these have no root; which for awhile believe, and in time of temptation fall away." Oh, what a nice and wise disquisition was this upon Truth! what knowledge of the human heart! "Receive the word with joy." The young, the buoyant, the thoughtless, and the gay might do this; but the seed lacked moisture, lacked the moisture of the tear of repentance, sorrow, affliction, and despair. Must God send these before the seed sown can take root? "In time of temptation fall away." God tries all His people, as He did Abraham, Job, David, Peter. In the hour of the power of darkness, the seed must not lack moisture,—it must be watered afresh by the incarnate Spirit of the Word, by the spirit of prayer (Rom. viii. 27), by the dew of the doctrine of Christ, or the tempted will fall away, and the joy of transient belief be turned to heaviness and death.

"But that on the good ground are they, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience." Mark well, here, that the first requisition to bear fruit an hundredfold, is to *keep* the word heard, not to trifle with it, not to comport one's self loosely and flippantly over the sacred volume; not to dream, or to be careless over sacred things, not to break our vows of consecration to God, not to suffer our actions to be independent of the Word; in short, not to say, or teach one thing

and do another, as, alas ! too many,—must I add, as we all do ? But when we have heard the Word, we are to keep it, to keep the letter of it in act, in spirit, and in truth : “ If any man *will do* his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God.”

“ And bring forth fruit with patience.” Who can discriminate, or portray aright this process of bringing forth fruit with patience ? “ My sheep know my voice, and they follow me,”—they follow Christ, as He leads them by His Word, from promise to promise, from one feat of strength to another, from one enterprise of holy service to another, from one spiritual conflict to another, from one victory to another, from light to light, from promotion to promotion, from advancement to advancement in His service ; and His servant thus led, loses hold of the world ; self no longer strives for mastery, the things of sense cease to affect him, the terrestrial is left far behind, and he is only pressing on to heaven,—all heart, all mind, and all spirit in the service of his God ! Disappointments, changes, losses, afflictions, trials do not afflict him ; he knows he is led, and still the faithful servant of his God ; and this is all he desires to know : “ Let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect.” None can be endued with this grace of constancy and heavenly calm, but those who are enlightened and made strong by a deep knowledge, and by the power of truth. These God will lead on into the foremost ranks of His army. They are fit for service, and He is not afraid to try either their strength or

loyalty. They may in this life see hard service, and no recompense; but He knows they will never be deserters. "That on the good ground are they, which in a honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience." Oh, what fruit, what clustering fruit, will the produce of the seed of the Word be! Fruit! Oh, let the Word of Life sink deep into our hearts, and the sure Word of promise to the faithful, too! "They that sow in tears, shall reap in joy. He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him." (Ps. cxxvi. 5, 6.)

"No man, when he hath lighted a candle, covereth it with a vessel, or putteth it under a bed; but setteth it on a candlestick, that they which enter in may see the light." From this verse occurring immediately after the Parable of the Seed, the question very naturally arises, Of what nature is the fruit of that seed? Light, essential light: "The entrance of thy word giveth light." And it is life, essential life: "The words which I speak unto thee, they are *spirit*, and they are life." Oh, God, we thank thee for this good seed! "He that soweth the good seed is the Son of man." Oh, thou Divine Sower, sow it deeply in our hearts, and it will remain, so that we cannot sin, because we *are born of God*! (1 John iii. 9.)

In noticing this phase of our Saviour's ministry, I will only make one more reference, and that upon the subject of Faith. Nobody can read the four Gospels without observing His constant and especial care to inspire, strengthen, and to

it faith. Then, it becomes us again to inquire, What is that mighty principle which He thus upheld to the world, to be maintained by all future generations? Who can define faith? We only find the word twice in the Old Testament. Moses says of the murmuring, rebellious Israelites, "They are men in whom is no faith" (Deut. xxxii. 20); and Ezekiel, "The just shall live by faith." (ii. 4.) St. Paul expounds the mighty doctrine of the ancient prophet, and reduced it to be that Divine credence in Christ, which is the power of God unto salvation." (Rom. i. 16, 17.) What is faith?

Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the *evidence* of things not seen" (Heb. xi. 1); evidence, when sense and reason fail,—still evidence. But do we not sometimes doubt and think deeply, almost dejectedly? Strange evidence! Not some visible evidence, some visible presence! Yes, when the voice of the Spirit is heard: "The invisible things of him are clearly seen." (Rom. i. 20.) This is faith, not that faith which is mighty in God's service, "which makes us valiant in fight,"—commanders in the field. I trust that He will not break the bruised reed; that He is merciful and indulgent even to "little faith;" but God needs in His service soldiers who can and who will endure distress, who will press on through the thickest of the fight, who can lead on his hosts to victory; and not the puny, feeble band who wants to be dandled upon the lap of ease; they can believe that God is their Father and their

Friend. He wants those who, seeing Him the Invisible, can soar above the things of time and sense, and raise their fellow mortals to the skies. God wants, manifested to a lost world, *evidence* of Himself,—the evidence of Himself in Christ, the one Great Reconciler of a lost world to Himself. Oh, for faith to know God in Christ our Restorer, Redeemer, Priest, King! “Lord, increase our faith;” but what are the divinely-appointed means of this *increase*? As I have often said, God does not deal in abstracts; all is definite, absolute, complete, practical. With regard to God, the world now stands in awful, sublime silence: no angels descend to meet with, to speak to, and to console man; no Deity upon the mercy-seat between the cherubims, speaks to a Moses and to an Aaron now; but He is incarnate in His Word, and speaks to His own people from thence: the incarnate Spirit therein inspires faith in them from thence: “Faith cometh by the word of God.” (Rom. x. 17.) And the being thus inspired, thus endued with life, is an intelligent soldier of Christ, a strong, active, skilful commander in the field, a judge upon the twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

Or, to change the metaphor, then we shall not only come with our own diseases, with our sores, and leprous condition to be healed of Christ; but we shall bring, also, the diseases of others, and they will be healed too. A man of sound scriptural faith is a principle of life; and this brings us to the last case I shall notice upon the subject.

We read, as Christ was teaching, that there were Pharisees

and doctors of the law sitting by to hear Him, out of every town of Galilee, and Judea, and Jerusalem : and the power of the Lord was present to heal them. And men brought in a palsied man with the palsy, and because they could not bring him to Jesus because of the multitude, they went upon the house top, and let him down through the tiling into the midst, before Jesus ; and when he saw *their* faith, he said unto him, Man, thy sins are forgiven thee. Let us learn to follow *their* example, to come to Jesus with each other's diseases, to have faith in Him for others, and not try to thrust each other from His feet, to load with ignominy those whom He has justified, and to make leprous those whom He has cleansed. The scribes and the Pharisees may murmur and reason because Jesus forgives sins ; but independent of their anger and of their accusing Him of blaspheming, the healed will praise and glorify God ; and they, too, as of old, must glorify Him and say, " We have seen strange things to-day." Oh, blessed Saviour of the lost ! O thou Healer of our palsied ones ! give us such faith in thee, such perseverance in coming to thee, and may we be so cured of thee, that the scribes, Pharisees, and the multitude may exclaim, " We have seen strange things to-day ! " It is very sinful not to believe God, not to rest calmly in His promises, His faithfulness, His wisdom, power, and love. Let us do so more fully, for He is always the same, and then His enemies and the multitude will be heard to exclaim, " We have seen strange things to-day ! " Let us trust Him in the dark and stormy night,—in the

swells and billows of spiritual conflict, in the hidings of His face, in the dark experimental teachings of His grace, in all His chastisements, in all His sovereign commands to diligence, to duty, to humility, to suffering, to patience, to love! Let us trust Him as He leads us onward and upward to higher views of His holy and exalted nature: I say, in all strange vicissitudes, in all convulsions and revolutions, physical, national, and ecclesiastical; in physical dissolution, in all temporal dissolution, let us trust God *calmly*, stedfastly, immovably; let the eye of faith rest lucidly upon His Word, His power, and His love, and He will overreach all,—overreach all by His wisdom, by His power, and by His sovereign grace. He will bring light, and health, and peace, and joy, glory, and eternal life out of confusion, and conflict, so that we shall be obliged to exclaim, “Let every thing that hath breath praise the Lord!” While the scribes, pharisees, and the multitude will exclaim too, “We have seen strange things to-day.” “Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.”*

* See further, pp. 195 and 196 of my work upon the Apocalypse, for this doctrine of the water of the Word.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE INSTITUTION OF THE APOSTOLIC CHURCH.

I must now look at another phase of our Saviour's ministry, the institution of the Church by Himself. God instituted the Jewish Church, and, with the exception of the work of Redemption, it is to me the most striking phenomenon of Revelation. See it as left not only upon Divine record, but divinely substantiated by that page of time which was then in the future, but which now stands the evidence and the fulfilment of the Sacred Record. The mighty God, the ever-lasting Father, descended from His throne of glory to the capacity of fallen man, to the darkened understanding of the lost, to propound to him, first, the grand scheme of redemption, His own ineffable design of love to him; and secondly, to ordain him the human instrument in His hand of that design, the human instrument of the world's salvation. The Jewish Church utterly failed in her commission, not only in going to proclaim salvation through a coming Christ, but she called down the vengeance of heaven in rejecting and crucifying Him. It is true, it is written, "It is expedient for us that one man should die for the people," but the work

of death should have been the devil's : his in his own agent "the beast," which rose up from the beginning ; then Christ's work and resurrection from the dead would have been a complete victory over him ; but when his own Church allied herself with the beast in that work of death, she became alike guilty and dead in His sight ; so that I believe now the one may be as legally raised to life by Him whose prerogative it is to reign, as the other. Who shall venture to contract or to compass that glorious prerogative ?

But when that Church failed in her high commission, again the mighty God, the everlasting Father, descended in visible form to ordain man the human instrument in His hand to recover man. "The word of the Lord came unto Jonah the *second* time, saying, Arise, go unto Nineveh, that great city, and preach unto it the preaching that I bid thee." "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations." "So Jonah arose, and went unto Nineveh, according to the word of the Lord." Now it is this Divine institution of the Christian Church as divinely recorded which I am about to notice ; and the result, her failure, as now seen in the page of the past, which was then in the future but clearly seen by that omniscient God who

• is ever in the midst of the seven Churches, and was too proclaimed by Him, by His servants the ancient prophets, in the four Gospels, and by His servant John in the Revelation. But I have *here* principally to notice the institution of that Church by Himself. I shall first notice the induction of

the priesthood into office, and then the nature of their vocation.

I must connect the ministry of the Apostolic Church with that of her Head, just as we find the three successive ministries in the life of Jonah. Christ was not only her life, but her example, and she can no more swerve from the one and live than she can from the other. The very letter, precept, and spirit of the Divine code must be obeyed both individually, and as a body, a Church. When Christ came, the temple worship had become a gigantic system of proud externalism; the Church had throughout her day of office and of grace most grievously swerved from the Divine ritual, the spiritual meaning of the typical and ceremonial service had been left most miserably unelucidated; rank formalism and men's traditions had supplanted the Divine means of knowledge and of grace. There was a large body of Pharisees, Sadducees, scribes, doctors, rabbies, lawyers, and learned masters in Israel, who were as ignorant of the kingdom of God and of the doctrine of Christ, as though no foreshadow had ever fallen from the typical service. Trace only the characters of Annas and Caiaphas the high priests; they were Antichrist: and so of the whole body; pride, malice, self-glorification, an arrogant domination, and a presumptuous, cruel exercise of human power, a spirit of persecution and blood marked their course: the mark of the beast was upon them. It was from them Judas received a band of men and officers to take Christ. (John xviii. 3, 7, 32.) See the picture drawn of

them by Christ in Matthew xxiii. and in Luke xi. St. Peter, speaking of their ripe state of formalism and rejection of Christ, significantly called them, "You builders," and with the staff of his office in his hand, he ventured to assert, "Whereunto also they were appointed." (1 Pet. ii. 8.)

But St. Paul said, "At this present time there is a remnant according to the election of grace," and it was of that remnant Christ founded the order of the priesthood of the Christian dispensation. The Christian Church is radically Jewish, although as to the representative body He said, "The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof." (Matt. xxi. 43—45.) Then, as I have said, I shall first notice the Divine induction of the new order, and then the nature of their vocation, the high and holy and awful nature of their vocation. In doing this, I shall not be afraid of truth because of error. We must either receive the Divine Rubric, the Bible, as it is, or reject it altogether; *every part* is to be received to the very letter, even as the doctrine of the Redemption of mankind is to be received in its complete, absolute sense. The institution of the Jewish Church might seem strange, trivial, almost absurd, and below the dignity of God, to the untaught of Him; the Jewish prophets might seem obscure, their predictions impossible, to those untaught of Him; but if they had all been more deeply studied, more strictly obeyed, and more implicitly received in faith, that Church had not failed in her Divine commission. The

Christian Church has failed also; and it becomes us well to go back to the foundation of her institutions, to see if she has studied well her charter, obeyed strictly her Master's precepts and example, and received in faith all His promises, so that the culminating point has been attained; or whether, like her brother steward and her sister kingdom, she has wasted her Master's goods.

Let us look, first, at the call to the apostleship. "One of the two which heard John, and followed him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. He first findeth his own brother Simon, and saith unto him, We have found the Messias, which is, being interpreted, the Christ. And he brought him to Jesus. And when Jesus beheld him, he said, Thou art Simon the son of Jona: thou shalt be called Cephas, which is by interpretation, A stone." (John i. 40—42.) What did Christ mean? Did Peter want to be told whose son he was? Neither do I think the world wanted to be told, for there is not any mention of his father in the Bible. Christ referred to the ancient Prophet Jonah, whose history typified the Jewish priesthood, the ministry of Christ in His day, and the priesthood after Him. "Son of Jona" simply signified succession, as the son of the high priest succeeded to the office of the deceased. Thus it was St. Paul said, "Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus." (Heb. iii. 1.)

"The day following Jesus would go forth into Galilee,

and findeth Philip, and saith unto him, Follow me." Here then, in the first chapter of the Gospel of St. John, three apostles are duly inducted into the priestly office: "Follow me." But I shall notice first very particularly the call of Peter, because he was the representative of the order, "the angel of the church in Pergamos" (Rev. ii. 12), the son of Jona, successor of Christ, the son of the high-priest, the lively stone laid upon the chief corner-stone.

In the sixteenth chapter of St. Matthew there is a still more particular setting apart of Peter to the priestly office, and as the representative of the order of the priesthood of this dispensation. Let us look carefully at the whole; and not err on the side of Rome, on the one hand, nor deny Scripture truth, on the other.

"Jesus asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I, the Son of man, am? And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist; some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets. He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." In the parallel passage in St. Luke (ix. 20), Peter's answer is more emphatic: "Peter answering said, The Christ of God." Christ is the Greek word for Messiah, which means the Anointed One, the Head and Foundation of the Church (1 Cor. xii. 12), or the antitype of the anointed stones; therefore, to understand this conversation of Christ with Peter, we must go back for a moment to the ancient types. Shiloh, peacemaker, signified

the Messiah. (Gen. xlix. 10.) "From thence is the shepherd, the stone of Israel." (Gen. xlix. 24.) "And Jacob rose up early in the morning, and took the stone that he had put for his pillow, and set it up for a pillar, and poured oil upon the top of it. And he called the name of that place Beth-el." (Gen. xxviii. 18, 19.) Beth-el means house of God. It was a type of the body of Christ, the temple of the Holy Ghost. "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." And thus it is, that in this world restored we find the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb, the temple, the light, and the glory of it. Christ was the anointed Head of the Church, "and the head of Christ is God." And thus it was God could say to the afflicted Jacob, "I am the God of Beth-el, where thou anointedst the pillar." (Gen. xxxi. 13.) There was no resemblance in Christ to a stone only to represent the material temple of the immaterial Spirit. See the foundation-stone of the tabernacle at the institution of the Jewish Church. "Then went up Moses, and Aaron, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel: and they saw the God of Israel: and there was under his feet as it were a paved work of a sapphire stone, and as it were the body of heaven in clearness." (Exod. xxiv. 10.) This transparent stone was Christ. The stone cut out without hands, which smote the image which Daniel saw, was Christ. (Dan. ii. 34, 35, 45.) David prophesied of the same: "The stone which the builders refused is become the head-stone of the corner."

(Ps. cxviii. 22.) And Isaiah : " Behold I lay in Zion for foundation a stone, a tried corner-stone, a precious stone, a sum foundation." (Isa. xxviii. 16.) And Zechariah : " Upon ~~an~~ stone shall be seven eyes." These were the Anointed One or the anointed stone Peter recognised, or rather, in Christ he saw the Antitype of them all.

We do not anywhere read of Christ being typically anointed but by Mary. She, in faith, poured precious ointment on His head. (Matt. xxvi. 7.) She anointed His feet with ointment. (Luke vii. 38 ; John xi. 2, 3.) She, in faith, waited to pour the royal unction when He rose from the dead ; but then, types and symbols had passed away. " Touch me not." (John xx. 17.) The spiritual baptism had taken the place of all. The Holy Ghost had done His work in bringing forth life unto victory. (Heb. ix. 14 ; Isa. xlii. 1.) " The Christ of God " was then Prophet, Priest, and King ; neither the prophetic, sacerdotal, nor royal unction was any more needed. Still, the gracious types of the Jewish ritual must ever remain deeply interesting to the sincere Christian, who rejoices in the progress and broad development of the kingdom of God. (1 Kings xix. 16 ; 1 Sam. xii. 3—5 ; ii. 10 ; 1 Chron. xvi. 22 ; Ps. cv. 15 ; ii. 2 ; xlv. 7 ; Dan. ix. 25, 26.) The typical anointing of the servants of the Messiah had, too, then passed away ; the spiritual baptism of the Holy Ghost had taken its place. " Who also hath made us able ministers of the new covenant ; not of the letter, but of the spirit." (2 Cor. iii. 6, 7.)

Thus the servants of Christ are now complex, duplex beings. And this is the meaning of the oft-reiterated expression, of the Head of the Church, of the Author of life, of the Divine Founder of the Christian Church. "Write the mystery of the seven stars. The seven stars *are* the angels of the seven Churches." (Rev. i. 19, 20.) "These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand." (Rev. ii. 1.) "These things saith he that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars." (Rev. iii. 1.) This duplex nature of the order of the priesthood will help us to elucidate some things which would be otherwise difficult in our Saviour's institution of the Christian Church.

But to return to the sixteenth chapter of St. Matthew. "Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say *also* unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

Let us analyse these verses, and, first, the benediction, "Blessed art thou!" Of what nature was this benediction? Certainly not of a temporal one. Peter had to be left of God to fall, to teach him humility and consecration to His Master's service; he had to go forth to be persecuted by the whole body of the expelled Jewish priesthood; he had to be crucified, to be baptized with the very baptism of the Head of the

Church; but over him by that spiritual Head was pronounced the benediction, "Blessed art thou." Then the blessing was a spiritual one. Had Peter known that, as he afterwards knew it, he would not so carnally as he did have tried to grasp the temporal. Peter is still Peter: foolish, grasping the shadow, misunderstanding his Lord's will—misinterpreting His dealings with him. Still many who are untaught of God think these scriptural benedictions temporal, and only measure God's favour by His temporal gifts. Not so the taught of Him. He knows his Redeemer "learned obedience by the things which he suffered" (Heb. v. 8), and he rejoices to do the same; he knows the choicest benediction of heaven is spiritual gifts, spiritual graces, and for these he prays. As the world wanes, as things temporal recede, rock, and rend beneath his feet, he finds the spiritual benediction a thousandfold more than an equivalent to all. "Blessed art thou." To be called of God to do His will is to be blessed; to be endued with life to do His will is to be blessed; to be regenerated, sanctified, justified, redeemed, is to be blessed. "Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered." Peter was blessed; John the Baptist was blessed although he was beheaded; Stephen was blessed although he was stoned to death. "Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward in heaven." This is heaven's benediction.

blesed art thou, Simon Bar-jona." Bar-jona means Jonah. "Thou art Simon the son of Jona." (John

The Jonah, Christ here referred to the succession in the prophet Jonah ; just as the son of the High Priest succeeded to office, so the priesthood after Christ succeeded. "As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you."

(John 21.) "As thou hast sent me into the world, even so I also sent them into the world." (John 17. 18.) "The word of the Lord came unto Jonah the second time." (Jonah iii. 1.)

"Thou art thou, Simon Bar-jona." Blessed in his Divine mission in his Divine commission ; the benediction is in contrast to condemnation ; the vocation is blessed, under the authority—government, as we shall see later, under a new life,—“Whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this ?” But it may be said, the apostles did come under condemnation ; they were all condemned by the enemy, by Antichrist ; and so was Christ. This is a vast field for deep study with regard to God’s dealings with the children of men. Christ was put to death for sin of the world ; He bore the penalty for all ; but I believe, yet cautiously, that the truly faithful to the word and to the spirit of all God’s commands can never in this life come under condemnation. If we keep the precepts of revelation in spirit and to the letter, we are victorious over the enemy even in this life. See this explained by the Judge of right and wrong in Matthew from the 21st to the 26th verse. The 22d verse refers

to the courts of law under the Jewish economy, the Sanhedrim, the council of twenty-five members, and to a small court. In this beautiful Christian Decalogue, the Sermon on the Mount, we catch a glimpse of the holy, high, and exalted nature of the Deity. If in action and in spirit, we rise to Him, we cannot even in this life come under condemnation: "Ye are perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect. God has no pleasure in the condemnation of His people; if they in any way come under a sentence of wrath, it is for themselves." "Whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment." Oh, let us ponder in our minds, and weigh well all the intricacies and realities of the spiritual law, and always fear Him who searcheth the heart and reins. "*Blessed* is the man that heareth me, watching daily at my gates, waiting at the posts of my doors." (Psalm viii. 34.)

It is true God is merciful to sinful man through Christ, and beyond the curse of time, death, and the grave, there is life; and thus it was He overreached the weakness and the failure of His apostles with promise and with everlasting life. "He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death" (Rev. ii. 11.)

"Faith is the victory that overcometh the world." And we do not believe that *calm*, holy, exalted faith, walking in the ordinances of the Lord blameless, and *resting* upon His omnipotence, can ever come under similar condemnation even in this life; but if it fail for a moment, takes the sceptre

government into its own hand, and loses ground thereby, it must rise up again—love never fails.

“Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona : for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.” Here is at once the Divine recognition of Peter’s faith, and consequently his fitness for his Divine commission. “And I say *also* unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church ; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.” It will be seen here, that this little word *also* refers to what Peter had said, “Thou art the Christ,” the Anointed One, the antitype of all the anointed stones. “I say also unto thee, that thou art Peter,” which means a stone ; thou art too a stone, “Thou shalt be called Cephas, which is by interpretation, a stone.” (John i. 42.) “Upon this rock will I build my Church.” Meaning, upon the anointed stone, Christ, and the divinely added stone Peter, or Cephas ; first the chief corner stone, and then the superstructure. St. Peter himself gave the key to this remarkable conversation with his Divine Master, “To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious, ye *also*, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. Wherefore also it is contained in the Scripture, Behold, I lay in Zion a chief corner stone, elect, precious : and he that

believeth on him shall not be confounded. Unto you, therefore, which believe, he is precious : but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner, and a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient : whereunto also they were appointed. But ye are a chosen generation, a *royal priesthood*, an holy nation, a peculiar people ; that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light : which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God : which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy." (1 Pet. ii. 4—10.) Notice well all the deep signification in these words of the chosen vessel of God's purpose : first, he confesses Christ, not only an anointed stone, but "a living stone," a material temple pregnant with life, that same which Daniel saw, cut out without hands, but which rose, increased, extended, till it filled the whole earth. St. Paul's definition of the subject is vivid : "Holding the head, from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, *increaseth* with the *increase of God*." (Col. ii. 19.) And St. Peter paraphrases upon this doctrine of Christ, upon the teaching of Christ, and says, "Ye *also*, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house." "Stones receiving life and everlasting increase from the Living Stone ; see the root of Christ's teaching in the building of the house of Lebanon, which was type of the Church of this first Christian dispensation."

Kings vii. 9—12.) Then the Apostle referred to the words of Isaiah xxviii. 16, and then again to the institution of the Apostolic Church by Christ in the chapter in Matthew in which I have been commenting, and then to the dissolution of the Jewish Church, because she had been unrepentant and disobedient, “whereunto also they were appointed.” A deep, almost an awful doctrine seems taught here,—predestination, election, Calvinism. How can we understand it? “Could not this man, which opened the eyes of the blind, have caused that even this man should not have believed?” Yes, He could have caused it, but herein lies the “mystery of the seven stars, and of the seven golden vessels;” the devil is to be actually expelled by them, as he was legally expelled by Christ, till God in Christ fills the whole earth; Oh, glorious Mediation! the fall is overreached and overcome; all evil, and the very being of the devil will be annihilated, put out of existence, and the victory will be won in Christ. “If ye believe in God, believe also in me.” Then the Apostle, turning again to the newly instituted Christian Church, said, “Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people, which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy.” That these dignities are spiritual, there can be no doubt; the Church is all these in virtue of her spiritual endowment,—“Creator, High Priest, after the power of an endless age,” King, God. But I think all spiritual powers, Sovereign, Priest, and Head, should be duly represented in the

Church militant, as they exist in the Church triumphant temporal, still spiritual. The Kingdom and the Church should be One, temporal, still spiritual.

We afterwards find the Apostle clear, and bold in proclaiming to the expelled body of the persecuting rabble, the high priest, elders, and rulers, the doctrine of the Anointed Christ as he had received it. "This is the stone that was at nought of *you builders*, which is become the head the corner. Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved." (Acts iv. 11, 12.)

St. Paul too took up the doctrine of the Divine Teacher and proclaimed it in all its purity and clearness: "Through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father. And are built upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, *Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone*; in whom the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: in whom ye *also* are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit." (Eph. 18, 20, 22.)

But to return again to Christ's conversation with Peter "I say also unto thee, that thou art Peter," a stone, "and upon this rock I will build my Church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." Here, warfare, deadly conflict is implied; hell, seeking to destroy, utterly to blot out the existence of the Church; let the spiritually dead tell of the calm of our Saviour's life, of the calm of the Christian's life, we are in the land of an enemy to God, and

be in us there must be warfare with this enemy ; if there
 no warfare, God is not in us, and we are at peace with
 1. But the promise is that hell shall not prevail ; as
 an individual, so with the body ; storm and tempest
 rage around, the serpent may cast out of his mouth the
 waterflood of affliction to cause the Church to be
 d away of the flood ; he may seek to exterminate her
 xk and ruin ; he may yet cause the blast of his mouth
 her low in the dust ; he may cause the desert, arid,
 ing sands to sweep over her, and prostrate her in the
 but he cannot prevail. "The gates of hell shall not
 . against it." Gates here mean kingdom, city, or
 : "Babylon is fallen, that great city" (Rev. xiv. 8 ;
 10 ; xvi. 19—21), and as all ancient cities were pro-
 by gates, the word is here employed. The Holy City,
 erusalem, is represented with twelve gates, signifying
 elve tribes of the Jewish Church, or the twelve Apostles
 Christian Church (xxi. 12 ; xiii. 25) ; therefore, the
 of hell may mean too, the agents, powers, or emis-
 of hell shall not prevail against it. Oh, let us not
 the conflict is at an end ; that Satan now means to leave
 urch at rest, to pass on quietly to heaven ; he means no
 hing. For what has he been strengthening the gates of
 ty, Rome, Mohammedanism, heathenism, but for war-
 I would say, let the Church arm herself, strengthen
 lf physically, mentally, scripturally ; let all powers,
 oral, visible, and invisible, be brought to bear. Be not

soon shaken in mind, nor be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word ; the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

“I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.” Some people will tell us that this was intended for the Apostolic Church only, that Christ never meant it for succeeding generations ; but it is a bad argument ; it is supposing that Church to have been more holy then, than she was ever to be again ; whereas, she should have risen from that state of holiness, to perfection ; and then, as we shall see, the language was adapted to, and intended for her in all ages. To abide by the Divine rubric is life, to swerve from it is death ; this was the original cause of the death of the Jewish Church ; neither the God of the one, nor the God in Christ of the other, ever did command, or institute what was not intended to be strictly obeyed even to the very letter. And why not ? This language is to me as plain, and easy to understand as the foregoing verses. Peter was simply the representative of the Christian Church, as Abraham was of the Patriarchal, or as Aaron was of the Aaronic priesthood. “To the angel of the Church in Pergamos write :” to his order were given the keys of the kingdom of heaven, that is, the Scriptures of Truth, the alone keys that can open that kingdom. Keys were anciently the insignia of royalty, authority, or office, as the royal signet or seal is now the sign of sovereignty ; a real key, or the figure of one, was worn

upon the shoulders. "I will clothe him with thy *robe*, and strengthen him with thy *girdle*, and I will commit the government into his hand. And the key of the house of David will I lay upon his shoulder; so he shall open, and none shall shut; and he shall shut and none shall open." (Isaiah xxii. 20; xxi. 23.) This was a prophecy of the first advent of Christ, of the Head and High Priest of the Church, of the Incarnate God walking in the midst of the seven candlesticks, and hence His voice from His intercessory throne, "These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth and no man openeth." (Rev. iii. 7—12.) See here these keys of knowledge restored to the *sixth*, the Jewish Church. Oh, let us remember, that the King upon the eternal throne is the Incarnate God of Revelation; He can give the key of light, of knowledge, and of power, to whom He will; He can take away the keys of office when He will, commit them to whom He will; shut, or open heaven to any body of persons when and as He will. Peter, as the ambassador of Christ was invested with the insignia of His Kingdom, with the royal arms of his sovereign Lord, "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us, be ye reconciled to God." (2 Cor. v. 18—20.)

"Church," throughout revelation, is synonymous with "kingdom;" and Peter, as the first bishop of the Christian Church,

was invested with the ecclesiastical insignia, keys, the symbols of office; and what other emblem could have been so appropriate? The Bishop of souls had opened the kingdom of heaven to all believers, and given to His servants the ministry of reconciliation. Christ's words to the whole body of Pharisees and learned doctors explain to us this figurative language to Peter: "Woe unto you lawyers, for ye have taken away the key of knowledge: ye entered not in yourselves, and those that were entering in ye hindered." (Luke xi. 52.) He then took away the keys of office from that Church, and gave them to the newly-ordained priesthood—shall I say, shut heaven to that Church? It is a strong expression, but scriptural: "They smote the men that were at the door of the house with blindness, both small and great: so that they wearied themselves to find the door." (Gen. xix. 11.) "These have power to shut heaven, that it rain not." (Rev. xi. 16.)

That the Apostles were Divinely-appointed and called bishops, there can be no doubt. It was said of Judas, "his bishopric let another take." (Acts i. 20.)

Bishop simply signifies an overseer, or deacon. The power Divinely committed to them was to be used conformably to the spirit and gospel of their Great Example. Both St. Paul and St. Peter's description of what a bishop ought to be, are truly worthy of their Divine Master. (1 Tim. iii.) "They that have used the office of a deacon well purchase to themselves a good degree, and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus." (Ib. iii. 13.) "A bishop must

be blameless, as the steward of God ; not self-willed, not soon angry, not given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre ; but a lover of hospitality, a lover of good men ; sober, just, holy, temperate : holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers." (Titus i. 6, 7, 9, 16.) Nobody can have any objection to bishops of this description. Those early overseers of the Churches simply laboured in the name of "the shepherd and bishop of souls."

"Whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven : and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven." This law, or promised power of the Divine rubric, has never been abrogated. The simple meaning of it is, that souls born again of life, brought into the bond of the everlasting covenant of gospel grace by their preaching, should live unto life eternal. "He that *heareth my word*, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation ; but is passed from death unto life." "If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed." The Divine promise was overruled entirely by the chosen vessel of service being filled with the Spirit, the agent of God. It was simply His gracious acceptance of faithful service, and the investiture of the spiritual man with Divine authority : "Whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven ;" whatsoever shall be loosed from the power of Satan on earth by your preaching, shall be everlastingly free in heaven. In Scripture a expression, bound in the chains, or bonds of Satan, is

common : "Ought not this woman, whom Satan hath bound, lo, these eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the *Sabbath-day* ?" (Luke xiii. 16.) And so of the bond of life : "The soul of my lord shall be bound in the bundle of life with the Lord thy God." (1 Sam. xxv. 29.) "I will cause you to pass under the rod, and I will bring you into the bond of the covenant." (Ezek. xx. 37.) This language, like all our Saviour's ministry, was rooted in Old Testament scripture. The staves of Beauty and Bands, in the eleventh chapter of Zechariah, signify Christ and the Holy Ghost. Staves, the staff of office, or sceptre of government,—a spiritual sceptre. This was committed to the spiritual servants who succeeded Christ. (Ezek. xix. 11—14.) "Take nothing for your journey, save a staff only." It may be broken with the people, or the priest,—covenant grace annulled : "They shall know my breach of promise ;" and this is precisely what Christ meant by bound and loosed.

The prophecy of Zechariah under the figure of staves, was one of the severance, or disembodiment of the Jewish Church for sloth and sin. See them thus loosed, Ezekiel xxxvii. and Revelation xi. Oh, shepherds of "the Good Shepherd," seek more to bind the flock, to bring souls into the bond of grace, and they will not despise, or be offended at the Divine and human absolution of sin. The seven stars, or the seven spirits before the throne, are the angels of the seven churches. "It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe." Let us beware how we annul Divine institutions, and Divine authority. It is very much to be deplored

in the rejection of error, we should reject truth. "Whatever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." But oh, I would say here, let the ambassador of Christ beware! Beware! for as her privilege is great, as her pretitute of Divine authority is great, so the account ofewardship that will be required of her will be very great, and her sentence for abuse of power will be very great.

Upon the subject of the institution of the Christian Church, would say, read carefully the eighteenth chapter of St. Matthew. It is a perfect rule of life. High and holy scept, for a high and holy calling, it is too high in evenly tone, to mar by human pen. How can the servants Christ trifle with the letter, and despise the spirit of it? and also the twenty-third chapter of St. Matthew, 5—8.

In the ninth and tenth chapters of St. Luke we find Christ instituting His Church, and again investing His vants with Divine authority for their Divine commission: Then he called his twelve disciples together, and gave them ver and authority over all devils, and to cure diseases." (ix. 1.) Is this power and authority abrogated? I do t believe it is. All sin is the devil; and the faithful minister of Christ has power over it: "He that believeth on e, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works an these shall he do; because I go unto the Father." (ohn xiv. 12.) "And to cure diseases." I am not going to ech that the servant of Christ has now power to work

common : "Ought not this woman, whom Satan hath bound, lo, these eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the *Sabbath-day* ?" (Luke xiii. 16.) And so of the bond of life : "The soul of my lord shall be bound in the bundle of life with the Lord thy God." (1 Sam. xxv. 29.) "I will cause you to pass under the rod, and I will bring you into the bond of the covenant." (Ezek. xx. 37.) This language, like all our Saviour's ministry, was rooted in Old Testament scripture. The staves of Beauty and Bands, in the eleventh chapter of Zechariah, signify Christ and the Holy Ghost. Staves, the staff of office, or sceptre of government,—a spiritual sceptre. This was committed to the spiritual servants who succeeded Christ. (Ezek. xix. 11—14.) "Take nothing for your journey, save a staff only." It may be broken with the people, or the priest,—covenant grace annulled : "They shall know my breach of promise ;" and this is precisely what Christ meant by bound and loosed.

The prophecy of Zechariah under the figure of staves, was one of the severance, or disembodiment of the Jewish Church for sloth and sin. See them thus loosed, Ezekiel xxxvii. and Revelation xi. Oh, shepherds of "the Good Shepherd," seek more to bind the flock, to bring souls into the bond of grace, and they will not despise, or be offended at the Divine and human absolution of sin. The seven stars, or the seven spirits before the throne, are the angels of the seven churches. "It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe." Let us beware how we annul Divine institutions, and Divine authority. It is very much to be deplored

that in the rejection of error, we should reject truth. "Whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven : and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." But oh, I would say here, let the ambassador of Christ beware ! Beware ! for as her privilege is great, as her investiture of Divine authority is great, so the account of stewardship that will be required of her will be very great, and her sentence for abuse of power will be very great.

Upon the subject of the institution of the Christian Church, I would say, read carefully the eighteenth chapter of St. Matthew. It is a perfect rule of life. High and holy precept, for a high and holy calling, it is too high in heavenly tone, to mar by human pen. How can the servants of Christ trifle with the letter, and despise the spirit of it ? Read also the twenty-third chapter of St. Matthew, 5—8.

In the ninth and tenth chapters of St. Luke we find Christ again instituting His Church, and again investing His servants with Divine authority for their Divine commission : "Then he called his twelve disciples together, and gave them power and authority over all devils, and to cure diseases." (Ib. ix. 1.) Is this power and authority abrogated ? I do not believe it is. All sin is the devil ; and the faithful minister of Christ has power over it : "He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also ; and greater works than these shall he do ; because I go unto the Father." (John xiv. 12.) "And to cure diseases." I am not going to teach that the servant of Christ has now power to work

the blessing, so that it shall be like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon Aaron's beard, that went down to the skirts of his garments, even life for evermore.

"He that heareth you heareth me ; and he that despiseth you despiseth me ; and he that despiseth me despiseth him that sent me." There may be a case of rejection of the Gospel of Christ ; but, for the most part, we see wherever it is faithfully preached, it is joyfully received. Nineveh was willing to receive the grace of God ; but Jonah thought only of the gourd for himself. And the very same spirit is expressed throughout the chapters from which I am quoting. "Master, it is good for us to be here : let us make three tabernacles ; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias." (Luke ix. 33.) These tabernacles are the booth which Jonah made for himself to sit under while he saw what would become of the city. How fearfully selfish nature breaks out, and betrays itself ! "Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven and consume them, even as Elias did ? But he turned and rebuked them, and said, Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of. For the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them." (Luke ix. 54.)

The success of the commission evidenced the Divine authority with which it was sent. "The seventy returned again with joy, saying, Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through thy name." This is precisely what I have before said, that the spiritual, faithful servant is endued with power and life to cast out Satan, and to command a blessing : shall I

o command life? The answer of the Head of the Church phatic and remarkable. It was through His name the were subjected; and, to confirm the authority, He red, "I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven." who has faith to go forth in his Lord's service, who believes mountains will remove before him, devils be subjected, Satan fall as lightning from heaven? Yet it will be so. hing shall be impossible to you." "Behold, I give you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over e powers of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means you." As I have said before, this may appear a try perfectly foreign to our age. We do not live in an f serpents, scorpions, and devils, of evil spirits and evil s:—but we do; our evil natures are evil spirits. What y? "The rottenness of the bones." (Prov. xiv. 30.) ith is cruel, and anger is outrageous; but who is able und before envy?" (Prov. xxvii. 4.) "Pilate knew or envy the Jews had delivered Christ." (Matt. xxvii. "Jealousy is cruel as the grave." (Cant. viii. 6.) I seen these raging in fearful fury in those who had taken ighest place as teachers of others, in those to whom it only be said, "Pull out the mote that is in thine own and then shalt thou see clearly to pull out the beam that thy brother's eye." And drunkenness, uncleanness, sel-ess, pride, avarice, these are all evil spirits, links between elves and the devil: and to enter into life eternal, they t be broken. "If I cast out devils by the Spirit of God,

then the kingdom of God is come unto you." "The power of the Lord was present to heal them." Think of the damning nature of the sin of avarice. A man amasses wealth, makes it his god, till he hears the voice, "Thou fool, this night thy life shall be required of thee." That god, the god of this world, blinds his eyes, lest the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ should shine unto him. Pride is the characteristic of the devil; and a selfish man is the antipodes of God. And yet of all these sins, and many more, it is written, "If ye have faith as a grain of mustard, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove." Just as the great mountain of human guilt fell before Christ, so His servants may still say, in His name, "Who art thou, O great mountain? before Zerubbabel thou shalt become a plain." This doctrine of sin is one of the fundamental doctrines of Revelation. Sin is a deep, foul, leprous wound; and it is to be healed, eradicated—actually and practically—just as it was legally cast out by Christ. This world is to be consecrated to obedience—to obedience in word, in thought, in act, in spirit; it is to be consecrated in love, in holy likeness to the Divine image, and, as I have said before, not to be slurred over by mercy. God's exalted nature can never descend to this: earth is to rise to heaven, just as heaven did descend to earth. "And I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me"—draw in holiness, in my own Divine nature. Our Intercessor before the throne is not a cloak for sin—a dark cloud to shelter sin, as some would have it; but He is

there, a Fountain of light to make it seen, known, felt, and hated ; He is there, a Fountain of life to give life to a lost world, to instil, to inspire, and to bestow His own nature, and to cast out the nature of the Evil One. The Divine Teacher will reprove the world of sin, because they believe not on Him. Just as an individual is convinced of sin, so the world is to be convinced of sin, convicted of God, and by God, by all the laws of His kingdom, and then it will receive sovereign pardon, "of sin, because they believe not on me." "Thou, O man of God, fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life." And hence the beautiful parable of the man who fell among thieves in the chapter from which I have been quoting (Luke x.), when the lawyer inquired what he could do to inherit eternal life. The man was the sinner ; the thieves, the devil. He has stripped him of his original robe of purity, he has wounded him deeply, oh, too deeply, for fallen nature to have consciousness of all the evil. And why ? Because he has left him half dead, stupified, insensible to the evil. The work of the priest and the Levite is to restore him to knowledge, to reason, to health, to God. Knowledge and life are the oil and wine which are to be poured into the leprous wounds, and they will be healed. The Spirit of God, through Christ, will return to our world, and its one great bodily wound will be healed.

"Write the *mystery* of the seven stars. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches." This mystery is sin, the warfare between God, the Spirit, and the devil. Visible

warfare, indeed, there is between man and man ; but the invisible things of Him are now made manifest, and God in man is at open warfare with the devil. "Ye are the temple of the living God ; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them ; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people." (2 Cor. vi. 16.) Hence the complexity of our natures : we are duplex. "The seven stars are the seven angels." The warfare is not ours, but God's. If we are fighting in His strength and in His name, we cannot fail, because He cannot fail. But, oh, let us beware of a spurious priesthood, of human combat ! Christian, enlist not under their standard ; fight against them, but not with them. The conflict will be a failure, and the loss yours. Judas was a counterfeit disciple. Satan entered into him, because he found the temple empty, swept, and garnished ready for him to inhabit, instead of a temple of the Holy Ghost. (Matt. xii. 3, 4, 45.) "And the last state of that man was worse than the first."

A temple of the indwelling Spirit is alone the legitimate ambassador of God, "Who hath made us able ministers of the new covenant ; not of the letter, but of the Spirit." And the Spirit is God. Simon, a great seducer of the people, thought that an apostolic benefice might be purchased with money ; but the answer of the Apostle was, "Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money. Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter : for thy heart is

not right in the sight of God. Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee. For I perceive that thou art in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity." Oh! may not multitudes now exclaim with Simon, "Pray ye to the Lord for me, that none of these things come upon me." (Acts viii. 18—23.) *

And again, we read of a false prophet whose name was Bar-jesus, meaning, son of Jesus, evidently in imitation of the Apostle Bar-jona, son of Jonah. He was a sorcerer, and another Balaam, allied to the suite of the governor of the island of Cyprus, "Seeking to turn away the people from the faith. Then Saul, (who also is called Paul,) filled with the Holy Ghost, set his eyes on him, and said, O full of all subtilty and all mischief, thou child of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord? And now, behold, the hand of the Lord is upon thee, and thou shalt be blind, not seeing the sun for a season. And immediately there fell on him a mist and a darkness; and he went about seeking some to lead him by the hand." What has not a counterfeit ministry to fear! Judicial, awful blindness, the wrath of heaven, spiritual death, so as even in this life, to seek some one to lead him by the hand. "Then the

* An eminent London lawyer told me that it is a fearful sight to see, as he sees constantly, livings bought and sold over bottles of champagne in the middle of the day.

deputy, when he saw what was done, believed, being astonished at the doctrine of the Lord." (Acts xiii. 10, 11.) Many believe that St. Paul did not receive his name Paul till after the conversion of this proconsul, Sergius Paulus, and that he took it as a trophy of the victory he had gained over the prince of darkness. Oh, let us strive earnestly for more such victories, and pray earnestly that more Sauls may become Pauls !

In the nineteenth chapter there is a still more Satanic and extraordinary case of counterfeit ministry. We read, the Holy Ghost was given by the hands of Paul, and *God wrought* special miracles by him. "So that from his body were brought unto the sick, handkerchiefs or aprons, and the diseases departed from them, and the evil spirits went out of them." "But when divers were hardened, and believed not, but spake evil of that way before the multitude, he departed from them, and separated the disciples. Then certain of the vagabond Jews, exorcists, took upon them to call over them which had evil spirits the name of the Lord Jesus, saying, We adjure you by Jesus whom Paul preacheth. And there were seven sons of one Sceva, a Jew, and chief of the priests, which did so." Note here to what a depth those may fall who are hardened, given up of God ; this Sceva was one of God's chosen people, a chief of the synagogue of Ephesus. "And the evil spirit answered and said, Jesus I know, and Paul I know ; but who are ye ? And the man in whom the evil spirit was, leaped on them, and overcame them,

and prevailed against them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded."

I say it reverently, that, as in the book of Job so here, these records are only a revelation from God of those invisible powers which are ever conflicting in our natures; and an awful revelation it is to a spiritually dead priesthood, to those who are presumptuously calling over sinners the name of Christ, while they are themselves temples, empty, swept, and garnished. The evil spirit will not only take possession of that house, but will leave many naked and wounded. "Such are false prophets, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is the great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works." (2 Cor. xi. 13—15.) As the representative of the Christian Church, the denial of Christ by Peter was a dark foreshadow: "This night before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me *thrice*." Prophetically this referred to the third night of time. (Jonah iv. 10; Esth. vi. 1.) And now it is fulfilled, "I do not *know* the man." By the highest authorities in the Church He has been openly denied; and multitudes who are saying, "Though all men shall be offended because of thee, yet will I never be offended," are now *offended*, and openly denying Him.

And not only has the Church denied Christ *thrice*, but the Three Persons in the Holy Trinity; the Antediluvian Church

denied the Father; the Jewish Church, the Son; and, "Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father. He that hateth me, hateth my Father also." And the Christian Church hath denied the Holy Ghost, the Paraclete, the Teacher, the Comforter of God's people: "And these Three are One." We have seen in the temptation of Christ, that He did not deny His God, His Father. (John xx. 17.) "I will set him on high, because he hath *known* my name. (Ps. xci. 14.) "Thou shalt *worship* the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou *serve*." Who can compass the extent of what this service should be? the communion, the social intercourse with God, which this worship implies? We have seen by His baptism in the Jordan He did not deny "the Spirit of Truth," the Teacher: "It becometh us to fulfil all righteousness." "For their sakes I sanctify myself." "Christ, who through the Eternal Spirit offered himself to God." It was by this "subjection unto the Father of spirits" that He lived, that He lives. Hear St. Paul's deep, able definition of the subject: "Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet. For in that *he put all in subjection under him*." So that this subjection of all to God, to serve Him, and to worship Him, was the victory of Christ, and now, His exaltation, glory, equality, oneness with Jehovah, God. (Rev. xix. 16.) And if *earth* would rise in oneness of spirit with God, she must bring the world, the flesh, and the devil into subjection. "Unto the angels hath he not put into subjection the world to come?" We are God's angels if we do

His will ; but if we deny the Holy Ghost in His people, He will deny us.

How deplorable is the sight to see the hoary head of three-score years, and of threescore years and ten, that has been crowned with a life of blessing, of position, of responsibility, preserved from ten thousand dangers, perhaps brought back from the brink of the grave, one last opportunity given of God to confess Him before men, to glorify His great name before men ; but instead of this, just as strength is failing, and life ebbing, not only does he, like Peter, follow Jesus afar off ; but again denies Him. Oh, I say, this is a solemn sight, "He that denieth me before men, shall be denied before the angels of God." And more than this, for in the parallel passage in St. Matthew it is written, "Him will I deny before my Father which is in heaven." "Whosoever shall *confess* me before men, him will I confess before my Father which is in heaven." If this be not done, how can His kingdom come ? become supreme ? Again, in how true a light does St. Paul set forth the subject : "I suffer trouble as an evil doer. I endure all things for the elect's sake, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory. It is a faithful saying : For if we be *dead* with him, we shall also live with him : If we suffer, we shall also *reign* with him : if we deny him, he also will deny us : If we *believe not*, yet he abideth faithful : he cannot deny himself." (2 Tim. ii. 10—13.) So that we see, our position before God is precisely one with Christ, He

was here as our example, and we cannot swerve from it, and live.

Is the inquiry of the Church that of the "young ruler," "Good Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" If it be, let her read the two chapters where this revelation is given, and she will not only read herself, but the true, Divine answer to her inquiry: None is good save God, but God is good, and they who would see length of days as a body must follow Him. When He spake to her by this narrative, she, or Peter was "A young ruler;" now, the Apostolic Church is hoary, very early she went away from Him very sorrowful, for she had "great possessions;" now, she goes away very sorrowful, for she is "very rich." The remainder of it, as a prophecy, was very striking: "*Peter* said, Lo, we have left all, and followed thee, what shall we have therefore?" The answer was, that those who did leave all, houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, should inherit *everlasting life*. And again, "Ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of Man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." (Matt. xix.) Christ is now sitting upon the throne of His *glory* (Luke xviii.), and the Apostolic Church is sitting with Him upon twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel; but has she in this her day of office followed Him in the regeneration? in that regeneration in which we have seen He followed His God, and his Father? or has she even done so up to her

power and privilege? If she has not, is she a fit judge in His kingdom, which is spiritual? Can she reign without any account of stewardship? As a body have we left all, and suffered all things for the elect's sake? We have not done so, and therefore we cannot "inherit everlasting life," not that present continuity of life and grace which the answer implied: "His favour is life." Although the true, hidden Church be a continuity here and hereafter; still, for the separating of the chaff from the wheat, there will here be *seven* sections, or dissections of the body, read this in allegory, type, in history. (Judg. xix.) And hence the winding up of the narrative of the "young ruler" by "the Prophet," "Many first shall be last; and the last first." Still, those of the true, hidden Church who shall follow their great example in this coming regeneration, shall still sit with Him in the throne of His glory, in the fourth dispensation, even as she—one in continuity—has sat with Him in government in this third dispensation. The promise is, "Everyone;" God has so ordained it to the end of time, "He that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give *power* over the nations. "They shall walk with me in white, for they are worthy." All who overcome are walking in white with Jesus now, His presence is always with the justified believer; it is because we do not know our privilege, that we do not rightly estimate it. His bodily presence not being here, has nothing to do with His real presence. But Oh, that mystical word, regeneration; who can track it in its heavenward course? Seven mystical steps of light and life, of glory: "According to his

mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and *renewing* of the Holy Ghost."

Some have thought that this promise of Christ to His disciples, "Ye shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel," referred to the final day of judgment: it is quite clear it did not; in that day He alone will be the Judge. (Matt. xxv. 31; xxiv. 44.) Compare the two records, and you will find them vastly different; then it will be His prerogative alone to lay open every heart to the light of conscience, of heaven, of the universe; all will be judged by Christ, by their faith in Him. In this passage He spake to the Church in the days of her flesh; and hence the awful responsibility of her position; the day of judgment, and of condemnation for abused prerogative. She cannot sit upon twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel while she denies with an oath, "I do not know the man." "Ye have sinned against the Lord: and be sure your sin will find you out." In judgment you will learn what sinners do learn, "Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet."

Far, very far be it from me to suppose that all have thus denied Christ; I know there is a very large body of faithful, devoted men; He himself makes the distinction: "*Thou hast* there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumbling-block before the children of Israel. *Thou sufferest* that woman Jezebel which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication." Thus we see that the sin of sufferance incurs implication in guilt, and participation in punishment.

CHAPTER IX.

THE INSTITUTION OF THE CHURCH AFTER THE
RESURRECTION.

As yet I have only noticed the founding of the Christian Church, and the induction of her ministers into holy office by Christ during His life, and it would seem enough to authorize their mission, to stimulate them to exertion, and to guarantee their success ; but it was not. And I must now notice the same organization and institution of that Church after His resurrection. His own ministry was then finished. He had been faithful, zealous, unflinching ; His consecration now, open to the scrutiny of heaven, scrupulously and nobly fulfilled ; and He returned from heaven to His disciples, for we have no reason to think He abode on earth, but to appear to them, to recognise and to reanimate them for their great commissions. I know His reappearance among them established at once the doctrine of His Divinity ; but His one design was to reinstitute them as a body to go forth and to bring the whole world into the body of the Church, of which He was then the Head. Let us glance at this as recorded by the Four Evangelists. We read in St. Matthew the twenty-eighth (and it is remarkable as showing how all

heaven is interested in the Church's mission), that the angel sent to declare Christ's resurrection, said to the women at the sepulchre, "Go quickly, and tell his disciples that he is risen from the dead; and, behold, he goeth before you into Galilee; there shall ye see him: lo, I have told you." Here it is evident the angel understood the design of the risen Head of the Church, that it was again to reorganize and to encourage them, His successors. "And as they went to tell his disciples, behold, Jesus met them, saying, All hail. And they came and held him by the feet, and worshipped. Then said Jesus unto them, Be not afraid: *go, tell my brethren* that they go into Galilee, and there shall they see me." Here Christ simply confirmed the angel's message. He had a purpose in again assembling His disciples. "Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, into a mountain where Jesus had appointed them. And when they saw him, they worshipped: *but some doubted.*" Oh, faith, mighty faith! how can we covet enough, and laud enough that omnipotent attribute of heaven! (Heb. xi. 3.)

"And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye *therefore* and teach all nations." This power is a spiritual power, it is the omnipotent attribute of God the Spirit; so, as I have said, the servant must be a spiritual man, or he is not invested with Divine authority: "God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts." And so all the ordinances of God are endued with life; His servants, His Word, His

ie, all scriptural rites: "Baptizing them in the name of Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." "No speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed: no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy st." (1 Cor. xii. 3.) The name of Christ is endued life; let it be faithfully, believingly, earnestly preached: here two or three are gathered together in my name, there in the midst of them" (Matt. xviii. 20); "Whatsoever shall ask in my name, that will I do." (John xiv. 13, 14.) have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that soever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may it you." The name of God in Christ is endued with "In all places where I record my name I will come unto, and I will bless thee" (Exod. xx. 24); "Go ye there- and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the er, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them serve all things whatsoever I have commanded you." It becomes us to pause here to glance back at that Divine dialogue, because there is not a single promise in the Bible out obedience to the commandments of God: "If ye love keep my commandments." The promise of the gift of Great Teacher that they themselves might be taught, was upon this condition. (John xiv. 15, 16, 26.) Read fully the four Gospels, and teach this doctrine of dience,—of obedience in act, in word, in thought, in rit. A volume might be written upon it, and the subject

never exhausted. The standard raised by the Divine ' is high, holy, exalted above the capability of man. nature fails, but at the command of Christ it rises up and is victorious in His name and strength : " All p given unto me, go ye therefore. And lo, I am w alway, even unto the end of the world." This is spiritual presence, as seen in the seven Churches apocalyptic vision. O Lord, come and dwell in a reign in us, and be our God ; and let us be thy people in Christ is, indeed, here a guarantee of power and faithful Church.

The record of St. Mark of the commission given is interesting. We there read, after His resurrection, appeared to Mary Magdalene. " And she went an them that had been with him, as they mourned and Who these were I do not know, for the record giver John of the disciples scarcely leaves us to conjecture they mourned and wept. Still the sequel leaves us that it was them,—“ They, when they heard that alive, and had been seen of her, *believed not*. After appeared in another form unto two of them as they and went into the country. And they went and told the residue : neither *believed they them*. Afterwards peared unto the eleven as they sat at meat, and up them with their unbelief and hardness of heart, beca believed not them which had seen him after he was Well might that heavenly visitant to our world, thus c

upbraid ; He had again and again told them that He rise again, wherefore then should they disbelieve Him ? indifference was a negative denial, and their actions a positive. And the hurried, impulsive manner of giving them commissions at that time tells us how deeply His soul moved by their unbelief. No tender prelude after the but imperative command, as though to awaken them from their incredulous, lethargic state—"Go ye into all the land and preach the Gospel to every creature. He that hath and is baptized shall be saved ; but he that believeth not shall be damned." The following verses show that this every sentence did not refer more to those who should not receive the Word at their mouth than it did to themselves, to the people which had gone before,—“These signs shall follow them that believe ; in my name shall they cast out devils ; they shall speak with new tongues ; they shall take up serpents ; and drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them ; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.” Has the promise been abrogated ? No, it remains in all its force : it has not swerved ; but God is unchanged : “All power is given unto me.” After the Lord had spoken unto them, He was taken up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God. The relation of St. Luke is the same, but more detailed. We find almost the same impatient sorrow at the unbelief and hardness of heart of His disciples. Oh, let it be a lesson to us to confide in Him in the darkest hour ; let us seek Him amongst the dead, but amongst the living

throng before the throne of God ; in the midst of the Church triumphant, sustaining her glorious position there ; let us seek Him in the true Church militant, sustaining her honoured position before the throne of God ; but Oh, let us not seek Him amongst the dead. Our hope will grow hopeless, our faith will waver ; we shall be afraid, and bow down our faces to the earth : “ Why seek ye the living among the dead ? He is not here, but is risen.” Then let us arise also, and join Him in that holy trio as they journey to Emmaus. “ Jesus himself drew near, and went with them.” Our eyes may be holden that we should not know Him ; but it will only be that He may upbraid our sadness, our doubtful communications, that He may test our thoughts of Himself, our secret cogitations of Himself, as a prophet mighty indeed before God and all the people ; as the Redeemer of Israel, as the Lord of glory, who was to be delivered into the hands of sinful men, crucified, and the third day to rise again ; and when He has elicited our state, set it in array in words, in too palpable demonstration to be evaded, He will break forth into the authoritative, sublimely sympathetic exclamation, “ O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken : ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory ? ” And then He will lead us on to a higher, deeper understanding of His Word ; He will come in and tarry with us, sit at meat with us, take that bread of life, bless it, break it, and give it to us : and then will our eyes be open that we shall *know*

Him. He may again for a moment vanish out of our sight ; but we shall remember, and *say* one to another, "Did not our hearts burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the Scriptures ?" Oh, then, let us love more as brethren while as yet we do not see Jesus, while as yet we do not know Him, know Him fully, while we do not understand His dark dealings with us, while we have only thought Him dead ; and in the end we shall find, that during that long communication in which our eyes were holden that we should not know Him, He was expounding to us in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself ; and we shall find that to have been the one necessary teaching, education ; the one Divine sustenance necessary for the mighty embassy with which we were charged ; we shall find that that little journey of mysterious silence, of walking with Him with our eyes holden, was the most sublime, profound, practical sermon in all our Lord's ministry : the one most potent in the ordination service, the one most omnipotent to send us forth in His service.

I think the third vial of time now to be poured upon the true Church will be just this little journey going to Emmaus. Her eyes will be holden for a moment, that she will not see her risen Head ; she will fall into doubtful communications ; she will walk and be sad. She will say, "We trusted that it had been He which should have redeemed Israel : and *beside all this*, to-day is *the third day* since these things were done." Yes, it is the third-day dispensation ; but she must

pass through one of trial; she must walk by faith, and by sight; the Holy Scriptures must be as it were ransa for guidance, for bread, for light and life, before the Innate God of the Word will appear, and before she is able to exclaim, "The Lord is risen indeed." Let her seek His Word, among the living and not among the dead, then Jesus Himself will stand in the midst of her, no longer any chain to bar His entrance. "Peace be unto you." Peace was always there; "Lo, I am with you alway;" but her eyes were holden.

"And while they yet believed not for joy, and wondered, he said unto them, Have ye here any meat? And they shewed him a piece of a broiled fish, and of an honeycomb. And he took it, and he did eat before them." This eating with disciples had precisely the same meaning as the institution of His holy supper. "With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer." His last act upon earth was to forgive all, to be at peace with all, by the Oriental custom of eating together; and the first after the death of Christ was done, was to eat with them, to forgive, to give them His peace, to be reconciled to the world He had redeemed, and was then about to leave.

"Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: and that repentance, and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And ye are witnesses of these things." What an enviable, great, holy, and pleasant

mission, to preach repentance and remission of sins to a world, and to be witnesses of the dying and risen testimony of the Lord of heaven and of earth.

When He confirmed the promise of His Father, made to ancient prophets. (Jer. xxxi. 31, 33, 34; Ezek. xxxvi. 7; Joel ii. 28.) "Behold, I send the promise of my Spirit upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, ye be endued with power from on high." This was indeed a Divine, most essential inauguration, the Pentecostal sign; it was a guarantee of power, of light, and of life to future ages of the Church. "He shall baptize you with Holy Ghost, and with fire." "Then appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost." Thus it was that immediately after the promise of this sign, we read, "And he led them out as far as to bethshaida, and he lifted up his hands, and blessed them. While it came to pass while he blessed them, he was taken from them, and carried up into heaven." And there still is, the White Cloud, the Fountain of Life, giving life to the world He has redeemed. "The power of an endless

"It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I remain, I will send him unto you."

The record given by St. John, of the re-institution of the Church of Christ after His resurrection, is more full and strong than that of either of the other Evangelists. Let us look carefully at it, for it is most important to the Church in

all ages. I say the record is striking. We read, Peter went into the sepulchre, saw the napkin and the linen clothes wrapped together, and laid aside, and yet turned away from the holy place with the most perfect indifference. John also went in, and we read, "he saw and believed." But what did he believe? for immediately we read, "For as yet they knew not the scriptures, that he must rise again from the dead. Then the disciples went away again, unto their own home." How was it possible that they did not know? Christ had again and again told them, in the most plain language that He could employ. After that deep and Divine Ordination Sermon in Matthew xvi., which I have so fully gone through, He said, "That he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day." (Ib. xvi. 21.) And again: "Behold, we go up to Jerusalem; and the Son of man shall be betrayed unto the chief priests and unto the scribes, and they shall condemn him to death, and shall deliver him to the Gentiles to mock, and to scourge, and to crucify him; and the third day he shall rise again." (Matt. xx. 18, 19.) And so, after He had strengthened the faith of His disciples by His glorious transfiguration, and by the appearance of Moses and Elias talking with Him, He taught them plainly upon the event of His death and resurrection. (Mark ix. 9, 10, 31.) And again, in that most affecting of all records, when they came to Him to tell Him John had been beheaded by Herod, the deed of blood brought so vividly before His mind His own Divinely-decreed

ring and death, that He went away into a desert place to spend the night in prayer; and He then taught them by the ship tossed on the sea, and walking on the water to them there, that a like dark tempestuous night would overtake the Church, that He would meet her in that stormy hour and watch of her history (Matt. xiv.); and then He told them, that, just as John had been put to death, so likewise shall the Son of man suffer of them." (Matt. 12.) And indeed throughout the whole of His history we find the prophecy of His resurrection most fully taught. (Luke ix. 22, 31, 44; xiii. 33; xvii. 25; i.) How, then, I ask again, when they came to the sepulchre, went in, and saw the linen clothes lying, that might be written, "As yet they knew not the scripture, that He should rise again from the dead," and then that they should say again unto their own home? I answer, because of the innate nature in man not to believe. The god of this world blinds men by temporal glory, and man can neither see nor understand anything future which mortifies His pride; and thus when their hope of temporal honour and preferment is abandoned their Divine commissions, and went back to the craft of gain upon the shores of Tiberias and Galilee. The words of the women who had been sent to them by the Lord and by Christ "seemed to them as idle tales, and they did not believe them not." (Luke xxiv. 11.) Oh, degenerate man! who can fathom this sin of unbelief? who can know how deeply it dwells in man? Self supplants Christ, natural

religion supplants spiritual religion, human economy supersedes in our estimation the kingdom of God.

And thus it is that in the midst of all this unbelief we find the August Presence again in the midst of His disciples, when they were gathered together, doubtless with the doors bolted and barred. We do not read that they were there for prayer, or that a door might be opened to them to go forth upon the great commission they had received, but, "*for fear of the Jews.*" Cowardice is the grim spectre of unbelief, as indomitable, unconquerable courage is the offspring of faith. As though their risen Lord had said, Why are you here congregated in fear, barred and bolted from man ; my presence, my power, is not bound. I am here in the midst of you, no bar or bolt can obstruct my entrance. "Peace be unto you." And, as it were to dispel for ever their unbelief, "He showed unto them his hands and his side. Then were the disciples glad when they saw the Lord." Had all these things prepared them for their Divine embassy ? Christ seized the moment of gladness again to invest them with Divine authority, with spiritual power : "Peace be unto you : As the Father hath sent me, even so send I you." Here Headship is proclaimed, and succession is ordained ; how plain, simple, and straightforward seemed the course to follow in the footsteps of the great Example ; a rule of life given, power and life guaranteed, and eternal life promised to the faithful. "And when he had said this he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost : Whosoever sins ye remit, they are

emitted unto them; and whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained." This is a verse upon which much has been written, which has caused much controversy, and from which has sprung the most horrible presumption, and priestcraft; at the abuse of our Lord's authority given to the Church does not alter the text, nor the legitimate use of that authority. He meant what He said; there was not a word in the Mosiac ritual that was not to be received as strictly orthodox, that was not to be obeyed as strictly Divine; so in the institution of the Christian Church there was not a word that was not to be literally, and absolutely obeyed to the end of time; the Church in spirit and in practice may swerve from scriptural ritual, but the righteous, high, and unchangeable Word can never swerve from His Word, from His own institutions, from His design to recover a lost world by those institutions, by the foolishness of preaching. "The foolishness

of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men." This verse in the institution of His Church, which offends and is rejected by many, has never been nor ever will be abrogated by Him; on the contrary, it is *the most* holy, and the most heavenly function of the Church to *forgive*, to *pardon*; and not only so, but it is the *most* progressive function of the Church; it is love, the very leaven of the gospel, which is to leaven the whole world. Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass or tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy,

and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge ; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing. Charity suffereth long, and is kind ; charity envieth not ; charity *vaunteth not itself*, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil ; rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth ; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. *Charity never faileth* : but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail ; whether there be tongues, they shall cease ; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away. For we know in part. But when that which is *perfect is come*, then that which is in part shall be done away." And then the almost perfected Apostle winds up the subject by that beautifully figurative, yet literal language, when he was a child he spake, understood, and thought as a child, but when he became a man he put away childish things. That is, in the beginning of his experience he was weak, but in the end he put off weakness, and attained to charity, which means love. In uncharitableness we only see through a glass darkly, but in love we see God face to face ; in weakness, and in infirmity we know but in part, but in love we know, even as we are known. "And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three ; but the greatest of these is charity. *Follow after charity.*" (1 Cor. xii.)

Christian reader, forgive me for thus extracting this chapter, but I have done so because it is this charity, this principle perfect before God, that is to absolve the repentant sinner, that is to pardon and forgive sins ; and it is, too, this charity, this love of God, of a Being high, holy, and exalted in justice, that is to declare sin not forgiven upon the impenitent. But even this denouncement may not be the taunt of an enemy, but the unwilling work of love, the attribute which sustains heaven.

Christ bridged the gulf between the sinner and God. "There is no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus." "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself," and He simply committed to His servants that "ministry of reconciliation," with the command not to impute trespasses to the believer, for Christ was made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him. And thus, the kingdom of God should have been all-conquering, all-prevailing, every redeemed soul brought joyfully to help in the further building up of that kingdom ; not only a trophy of redeeming grace, but a helper together of the Truth of God. "Now, then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us : we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God."

But if, on the contrary, the successors of Christ are to unbridge that gulf, to break down the ramparts of Zion, to nullify this Divine charter, and so to destroy the foundations of the City of Refuge, to drive believers from Him ; if His Church become theatrical, secular, instead of spiritual and prac-

tical ; if she impute trespasses when she should absolve from sin, and receive all believers, wherever they may be found, as brothers and sisters in Christ ; if, instead of saying, "Peace be to this house," she is to curse the hearth of the blessed of God, so as to cause confusion, and wandering from God there, God in Christ will speak, the angel of the waters of life will speak ; and hence the striking parable of the Two Sons ; the flippant reply of the servant sent to work in his vineyard, "I go, sir," but the master knew "he went not." "Verily, I say unto you, That the publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you." (Matt. xxi. 30, 31.)

And hence the Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus, coming, as it does, immediately after the parable of the Unfaithful Steward, who had wasted his master's goods. The rich man was the Jewish Church ; Lazarus was the whole body of the lost. He begged ; he desired to be fed, but he was refused. The Jewish Church died, and for almost two thousand years she has seen the Gentile in the bosom of God. But let us remember that that rich man had *five* brethren to whom he would send, lest they also should come into that place of torment. These five brethren were the priesthood of the five succeeding dispensations. Let us remember this was Christ's own parable, and His answer to the unfaithful, covetous, and then tormented house is very remarkable : "If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead." (Luke xvi.)

I will maintain that the Church of this dispensation has not

and will not fulfil the mighty embassy committed to her. Mark well here, that in this parable of the rich man and Lazarus, I do not say that the hell here mentioned refers *only* to the dead state of the Jews in this world. (Luke xvi. 23.) But their hope lost here, cut off from Christ here, their dead state here, is hell begun here, to be a continuity hereafter. Lost souls here, are one with hell beyond the grave. In the mind of Christ they were one ; just as heaven below and heaven above are one ; here begun, there perfected ; here holy, calm repose : there, intensified.

The words of Ezekiel are very much to the point upon this subject : " If the wicked restore the pledge, give again that he had robbed, walk in the statutes of life, without committing iniquity ; he shall surely live, he shall not die. None of his sins that he hath committed shall be mentioned unto him : he hath done that which is lawful and right ; he shall surely live." (xxxiii. 15, 16.) But if the servants of Christ, themselves not one " without sin," are to go back ten, twenty years more for the misfortunes of childhood, of unhappy and exposed position, and to taunt therewith parents, useful members of society, Christians of long-standing Christian character ; this would be to betray mind, again to betray minds into sin, and the kingdom of God could not progress ; this would be hell upon earth,—it would be to be cast alive into the lake of fire ; but the flame of eternal justice will recoil upon that " wicked servant," so that he shall hear the sentence, " Son, remember that thou in thy life time receivedst

thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things : but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented."

Oh, it is a great and glorious commission to pardon sin, and to receive such grace of the Spirit, and such gifts of charity that none shall be retained ! But instead of this, at the end of this Christian dispensation, when the world might have been saved but for the Rome of man's own bosom, we hear of nothing but loud clamour,—“Be sure your sin will find you out,” and other such like courtesies. By this school of old conventionalism we are sent back to the law, to read the naked letter of it, to be taught of transgression against it, although the sin has been repented of and forgiven half a life time ago, before it was committed. “And yet none of you keepeth the law.” Oh, miserable departure this from the Divine Rubric before us ! But be it known by the Church, that she can no more swerve from this orbit, and gravitate heavenward, than planets can wander from their orbits, and still maintain their harmony in the spheres. And hence the faithful warning voice, “I saw a great star fall from heaven, *burning as it were a lamp.*” See this same metaphor employed in the restoration of the Jewish Church, Isa. lxii. 1.

After this, we read Christ again rebuked the unbelief of his disciples by suffering Thomas to reach forth his hand, and to thrust it into His side : “Be not faithless, but believing.” Did they, then, believe, and go forth as commanded upon their great commission ? The last chapter of the four Gospels tells us.

. “*After these things* Jesus showed himself again to the disciples at the sea of Tiberias; and on this wise showed he himself. There were together Simon Peter, and Thomas called Didymas, and Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, and the sons of Zebedee, and two other of his disciples. Simon Peter saith unto them, *I go a fishing*. They say unto him, *We also go with thee*.” How can we account for this indifference, stupidity, and degeneracy of human nature? The disciples had been again and again organized for their commission,—invested with Divine authority and life, and yet the Good Shepherd, whom they had seen lay down His life for the sheep, found them again upon the shores of Galilee, with their own craft of gain, with their secular calling upon their lips: “*I go a fishing; we also go with thee*.” And who were there? Peter, he who had received the most marked commission as the representative ambassador,—he who had denied Christ, and been forgiven, whose reconciliation had been sealed by pledges the most sacred; John, the disciple whom Jesus loved, who had leaned upon His breast at supper, was, too, there; and Thomas, who, only in his last meeting with his Lord, had had his faith strengthened, even to the demonstration of touch and sight,—he, too, was there.

We read seven of the disciples were there; how many more we do not know. “*I go a fishing; they say unto him, We also go with thee*.” But there was a voice there, murmuring upon the placid lake and shore, that must yet arrest attention. “*That night they caught nothing*.” A night of toil and

watching had passed over them, but it was a useless expenditure of toil: "That night they caught nothing. But when the morning was now come, Jesus stood on the shore, and saith unto them, Children, have ye any meat? They answered him, No."

"And he said unto them, Cast the net on the right side of the ship, and ye shall find. They cast therefore, and now they were not able to draw it for the multitude of fishes." We read before, "The disciples knew not that it was Jesus." But this metaphorical miracle, this repetition of those wrought before upon the same consecrated shores, flashed conviction to their minds: "*Therefore* that disciple whom Jesus loved saith unto Peter, It is the Lord." There was then no need that they should toil for bread: "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men." "Carry neither purse, nor scrip, nor shoes." Their Master could command the mighty deep to give them bread, making that bread, at the same time, a symbol of the Bread of Life, with which they were to feed the Church. The doctrine of Christ is too omnipotent to be believed, but we must believe. Like the impulsive Peter, we must so feel our destitution as to be ashamed,—cast ourselves into the sea to go to the shore to Jesus; other disciples must come to Him in a little ship, dragging the net with fishes.

"As soon, then, as they were come to land, they saw a fire of coals there, and fish laid thereon, and bread." What new phenomenon was this in the history of the Church? It almost seemed to mock their night of toil, to shame their

unbelief; and as though, to make their incredulity still more apparent, the crime of turning back from their commission still more heinous: "Jesus saith unto them, Bring of the fish which ye have *now* caught." What startling, condemning facts to rise up before those unfaithful stewards! "Occupy till I come," was forgotten, and they seemed like spectres in their sublime silence, yet piercing voices to haunt their conscience, that they might go no more back. "Simon Peter went up, and drew the net to land full of great fishes, an hundred and fifty and three: and for all there were so many, yet was not the net broken." In this last wondrous Ordination Sermon, miracle rises upon miracle: could that Divine order of priesthood ever go back again? We shall inquire later. "Jesus saith unto them, Come and dine." This was, again, according to the custom of the East. A feast of reconciliation, a sealing of friendship; gracious invitation, "Come and dine,"—not of the portion taken in their night of toil, but of the miraculous draught, of the fish and of the bread seen upon the miraculous fire, which were symbols of the body of Christ upon the fiery, sacrificial altar. (John vi. 51, 53, 55; Exod. xii. 5, 8, 11; Levit. xvii. 11; Gen. xv. 17.) "And none of the disciples durst ask him, Who art thou? knowing that it was the Lord." Who can conceive of all the deep sentiment which passed in the minds of the disciples during that profound silence? Awe-stricken, conscience-stricken, silent! Who knows how deeply, and how extensively the Searcher of Hearts pleaded with them then

and there? But no sooner was the wound probed, than it was again healed: "Jesus then cometh, and taketh bread, and giveth them, and fish likewise." Reconciliation was then forever sealed with the Church militant.

"So when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, of Jonas"—the translator has here each time added, *Son of Jonas*, deduced without doubt from John i. 42, and Bar-jona, whose succession in the priesthood is intended, just as the Son of the High Priest succeeded him in office, but here in this last ordination service the meaning is more vital; son, is in italics, and not in the original—"Simon, of Jonas" (of the High Priest Melchisedec, who was then made to them after the power of an endless life) "lovest thou me more than these?" Lovest? I cannot conceive of a person not loving God. I had almost said, I can conceive of a person loving Him too much, like Mary sitting at His feet when perhaps she should be upon more active duty; loving Him more than father, mother, sister, brother, or even life itself; but I cannot conceive of a person not loving God. "More than these;" more than gain, more than labour for the meat which satisfieth not, more than your old pastime of fishing? "He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my lambs." This was the commission of the antediluvian Church. Gentle, beautiful, and practical, yet vital, and glorious commission! Feed the lambs of the flock with the sincere milk of the Word. "He saith to him again the second time, Simon,

of Jonas, lovest thou me? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my sheep." Doubtless the commission given to the Jewish Church was here intended. Is the commission now more onerous, more difficult, to feed the flock of Christ with the bread of life? "Strong meat belongeth to those that are of full age." Yes, the charge might be more weighty, but grace would be in proportion. "He saith unto him the third time, Simon, of Jonas, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep." Why this mysterious, solemn, and emphatic repetition? Because then, the *third* time, the Divine commission was given to the Church to test her love to Christ; and thus it was to her a very faithful and a very solemn repetition. When, oh, when will she learn to give heed to the solemn things of revelation? A more solemn announcement was then about to follow. Peter was to lay down his life in the cause he had then and there so solemnly engaged to defend: "When thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not. This spake he, signifying by what death he should glorify God. And when he had spoken this, he saith unto him, *Follow me.*" Where was Peter to follow Christ? This was his last leavetaking of his disciples; he was then about to

ascend into heaven ; Peter had to go forth upon his great commission. How wise and appropriate the injunction, the winding-up of this last and beautiful ordination service, "Follow me ;" follow my example, my life, my doctrine, my obedience even to death, "Follow me." Peter must die ; be crucified, even as Christ was. Oh, what a solemn prophetic voice ! We read Peter turned, and seeing John, he inquired what he should do. Jesus immediately very significantly referred to the marvellous revelation John should receive ; and now that we know the burden of that vision, "Write the mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches : and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches." We understand how even in that last institution of the Church with Peter, her glorious Head was looking forward to the time when he should again reinstitute her with John, and when by him he should give to her the detail of her history, of her conflicts, her enemies, her victories, and her ultimate glorious redemption and salvation. But let the busy, curious Peter see to the solemn charge which had been committed to him : "If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee ? Follow thou me." Oh let us arise, gird our loins afresh, and trim our lamps afresh, not to follow Jesus to the judgment-hall to deny Him there ; to the bar of the world to deny Him there ; not to follow Him to the cross and desert Him there ; not to follow Him to the tomb and leave

Him there ; but let us be prepared to follow Him to the cross, to be crucified with Him there : "The world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." "Our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin." Let us not, then, be too busy, nor indifferent about the commissions of others, but hear our Lord's voice for ourselves, "Follow thou me."

This *third* institution of the Church in our world, by God Himself, is, I think, a more solemn and awful responsibility for those whom it concerns, than they are themselves aware. Christ certainly did His part faithfully, and therefore I believe a lost world will be required of her. "He saith unto him the *third* time, Simon, of Jonas, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved because he said to him the third time, Lovest thou me?" Peter, thy day of trial is over! He asks thee now, you His *professed friends*, "*Lovest thou me?*" *Lovest?* What is your answer? It is to Him and to heaven you have to answer, "Lord, thou *knowest* all things; thou *knowest* that I love thee." We are now guilty, or not guilty, at that bar; evidence is for us, or against us; "Jesus saith unto him, *Feed my sheep.*" Does not an echo, a vibration of Peter's grief in our hearts,—in our world,—tell us there is a void still unfilled by love? "Feed my sheep." "Follow thou me."

CHAPTER X.

CHRIST'S MINISTRY.

I CANNOT leave the subject of the Institution of the Christian Church by Christ without again referring to three things. First, to the subject of faith; secondly, to the necessity of the Pentecostal baptism to the service of the ministry; and thirdly, to the character of Peter as the representative of the priesthood of this dispensation, and as the counterpart of it.

First, I must again refer to the subject of faith. There appear to me two phases of faith: one, our faith in God in Christ, our Redeemer, our reconciled Father, our Justifier, and our Life; the other, faith in God in ourselves as the instruments of his purpose. Just as God was in Christ, the Omnipotent Conqueror, so in degree His Spirit is in us the Omnipotent Conqueror. Mark what I say. I do not say He is God in us by nature, but by grace, when a being is *born again*. The Holy Ghost is God, and God in man is the Almighty Conqueror. "It is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure." (Phil. ii. 13.) "Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that

worketh in us." (Eph. iii. 20.) "What! know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?" So far from this being a native state, it is the purchase of the work of God in Christ, the result of His work of reconciliation; and the Apostle went on to declare this: "For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's." (1 Cor. vi. 19, 20.) Now, I think this is a very important phase of the doctrine of faith; and nobody can read in the four Gospels the institution of the Christian Church by Christ without seeing the pains He took to induce or to inspire this faith in the apostles, as instruments of His operation. His whole training and teaching were not more to establish faith in Himself, the Author of Life, than they were to make His disciples know themselves to be the possessors of that life, and instruments to employ it to the everlasting establishment of His kingdom. This phase of His ministry, this voice was not only addressed to them, but it reached on, and addressed all ages. "Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed." And then, again, we are to believe in the antagonistic power, "the spirit which now worketh in the children of disobedience." (Eph. ii. 2.) And we are not only to believe, but to be in daily, watchful, prayerful, actual warfare against that enemy of God. He is in perfect peace with the dead in sin, but he will wage *continued* and deadly warfare against a temple of

the Holy Ghost ; and this proves to us that the enmity and the warfare is against God the Eternal Spirit, and not against the human family and material creation, only as they are the Divinely-appointed seat of war. Be sure, if there be any fallen affection, passion, sin in our bosom, which the devil is vigorously and daily trying to influence, to maintain, there is some deep purpose he has in view, some Divine light behind—he has determined to obscure, to extinguish ; cut off that sin, whatever it may be. It may be said, “ I cannot, I cannot : ” it is part of my nature. ‘ Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots ? ’ ” Yes, I say ; cut it off ; childhood, youth, middle age—cut it off ; it will, it must lead to hell in this life, “ where the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.” “ The wages of sin is death.” If we do not overcome sin, it is because we do not go about it in right earnest. God is omnipotent in us, and the devil cannot stand before Him. I know the conflict may be deadly ; but faith can remove mountains : we must trust more to God and less to ourselves. Read carefully the short book of Habakkuk : it is marvellous upon the sin of distrust of God. “ The vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie : though it tarry, wait for it ; because it will surely come, it will not tarry. Behold, his soul which is lifted up is not upright in him : but the just shall live by his faith.” (Hab. ii. 1—4.)

And take that most marvellous of all chapters upon the subject of faith, the eleventh of Hebrews. Go back with

the Apostle to every triumph of it, referred to by him in it, and see what was the mighty principle that bore aloft the elders of the infant Church to obedience, to action, to such noble acts of self-denial, to do the will of God, and to glorify His great name in trial, in darkness, in danger, and to death. "Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God." We cannot go back so far as that; we cannot track back the omnipotent principle, attribute, thus far; we cannot grasp or scan that first great Cause which did not make things which are seen of things which do appear; but we can exercise that first great principle as we are commanded by Him whose high prerogative it is to frame all things by His word; we can believe the same power dwells in us which did in Him, that nothing is impossible with God—this is faith. Thus it was that in the first dawn of the infant Church, Abel offered to God a sacrifice typical of One, then four thousand years in the future. What maturity of the principle translated Enoch to heaven without dying we do not know, it is enough for us to know that there is an attainment of faith far, far beyond our present, poor, low estate. "Without faith it is impossible to please God." "By faith Noah, being warned of God of *things not seen as yet*, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house." When all derided, thought him mad, he toiled on, and by his faith the utter extinction of the human family was averted. By faith Abraham, when he was seventy-five years old, went forth to go into the land of Canaan not

knowing whither he went. He did not cavil at God's dealings with him; he did not question whether God was right or wrong, but obeyed implicitly and cheerfully; he did not study his ease or his will, but simply obeyed God, confident what He judged was for a wise purpose. "By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son." "By faith Isaac blessed Jacob concerning things to come." "By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season." "By faith the walls of Jericho fell down, after they were compassed about seven days." "And what shall I more say? for the time would fail me to tell of Gideon, and of Barak, and of Samson, and of Jephtha, of David also, and Samuel, and of the prophets, who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire"—the violence of strife—"escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens."

I have thus extracted this because I know a fearful day of trial is about to overtake the Church. God is about to try her faith. Will she, like these ancients, glorify God in the fire? Will she lose her hold of temporal glory and sovereignty, and care only to show to the world that the kingdom of God dwells in her? Will she survive the wreck by faith?

Will she rise up out of its ingulfing billow by faith? Will she prostrate her haughty spirit before the blast, and rise again by faith? Will she wisely and calmly school mental and spiritual nature, so that both shall be strengthened thereby, by faith? Will she so school the mind to physical convulsion, to bodily suffering, that they shall not suffer dissolution thereby, by faith? Here is danger, I would say, to the whole body of the Church; treat thyself tenderly herein, act warily, because the devil's one purpose will be a deadly onset, "that he may cause her to be carried away of the flood." I would say, let all powers, mental, physical, and spiritual; all powers, visible and invisible, be strengthened for the mighty conflict; let the mind bow in meekness, but in faith; let the spirit bow in humility, but in faith; let temporal power, glory, and supremacy surrender calmly in faith. Let the world see that the Church now, like "the friend of God" of old, can go forth into a place she knows not of, in faith. Let the world see that she can talk to God face to face now in His Word, and at His bidding refuse to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, and choose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season. Let the world see she can, *through faith*, subdue kingdoms, work righteousness, obtain promises, stop the mouths of lions, quench the violence of strife and hatred, escape the edge of the sword, *out of weakness be made strong*, wax valiant in fight, turn to flight the armies of the aliens. Let her obtain a good report *through*

faith, and then shall she, with the sister Jewish kingdom, receive the promise. "Art thou not from everlasting, O Lord my God, mine Holy One? *we shall not die*. O Lord, thou hast ordained them for judgment; and, O mighty God, thou hast established them for correction. Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity." Yes, God is about to speak in judgment for correction. "It became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the Captain of their salvation *perfect through sufferings*. For both He that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all one." (Heb. ii. 10, 11.) If Christ learned *obedience* by the things which He suffered, shall the Church refuse to learn the same? This little world, this temple of the Most High, is to be consecrated to obedience. She is to learn to obey, not only every precept of the moral code to the very letter, but her priests are also to learn to obey the Divine ritual the Head of the Church gave her; *to obey*, not theoretically and secularly, but by "the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus." Then let us pause here for one moment to offer an aspiration for her in her coming blast. Oh, Father of all mercy and of all grace, give her faith that she may conquer in the name, in the triumph, and in the life of her Head!

But again: let the true Church have faith in herself, as the organ of the life and power of God. She is ordained to life. He may strip her of temporal power and glory, but it will be that she may shine forth in the gentleness, true holi-

and humility, in the glory of His kingdom; that she may go forth a light to lighten the world, a vessel of His grace, to bear His name before the whole world. God scourgeth every one whom He receiveth. *Scourgeth!* It is a frightful word; but "If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not." As an instrument of his purpose, I would say, "Go forward," undaunted by correction, by scourging, but not untaught, unsanctified. "Go forward." "Christ in you the hope of glory," Christ in you the hope of arriving at a state of true holiness, for that is the meaning of *glory*. He promises no extraneous *glory*, no *glory below this*, His own *glory*, which is His own essential holiness. Have you ever seen God in His glory, in His justice, in His righteous dealings? in His holiness? You must *see Him* before you can be like Him. "Be ye imitators of God as dear children." But you can never imitate Him till you have *seen Him*; nor can you ever serve Him aright and efficiently till you have *seen Him*. His glory is about to pass by. "Thou art righteous, O Lord, which art, and wast, and shalt be, because thou hast judged thus." (Rev. xvi. 5.) Stand by, and *see His glory*, and then arm yourself afresh for service, for holiness, for glory. "Christ in you the hope of glory." "Peter and they that were with him were heavy with sleep:" when *they were awake*, they saw his glory. "He hath stripped me of my glory." "This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God." "The glory of the Lord

shall endure for ever." "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts: the whole earth is full of *his* glory."

And this leads me to the second thing I have to notice here, the necessity of the baptism of the Spirit to the service of the Church. I know the Pentecostal baptism was a miraculous effusion of the Spirit for the formation of the Christian Church, but it was not an isolated occurrence in her history, only a more gracious manifestation of that which was to continue to all ages: "Tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high." (Luke xxiv. 49.) "I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter;" or, Teacher, "that he may abide with you for ever; even the Spirit of Truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth Him not, neither knoweth Him." (John xiv. 16, 17.) "And when the day of Pentecost was fully come," Peter stood up boldly and said, "This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, He hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear." (Acts ii. 33.) I do not mean to say that we are now to look for such an effusion of the Spirit as is here recorded, although in our own day we have seen a most gracious sealing by the Spirit, and in the future we see even a more miraculous and glorious sealing than on the day of Pentecost. (Rev. 7th.)* But what I will maintain is, that the Pentecost was

* This sealing is that resurrection of the Jewish Church referred to by Isaiah, when "A nation shall be born at once." (lxvi. 8.)

rantee from God of life for all ages ; and that each dual servant of Christ is to acquaint himself with particular gift, and then to exercise it, to employ it fully in whatever he believes to be his Divine calling. "Look not the gift that is in thee." "Stir up the gift that is in thee." Every man hath his proper gift of God. "If ye knewest the gift of God." "Do not err, my beloved brethren. Every good gift and every perfect gift is from our Father in heaven, and cometh down from the Father of Lights." Throughout the whole of the New Testament we read of gifts, they are spiritual gifts, and we should do well, instead of expecting "signs and wonders," to give diligent heed to our proper gift of God ; and not to quarrel with each other because our gifts are as varied, and as infinite as our Father himself is infinite. This subject is so fully treated, and spiritual gifts so ably characterized by St. Paul in the chapter of the 1st of Corinthians, that it would seem almost impossible another word could ever be required, but the contrary much is needed to be said ; we settle down in our proper gift, even to the sin of despising the gifts in others, but in doing this we despise both Christ and the Father who sent Him, for they are His gifts ; and we disobey the Apostolic injunction, "In lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man at his own things, but every man also on the things of others." "Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love ; in honour preferring one another." Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit.

And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all. To one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom ; to another, the word of knowledge by the same Spirit ; to another, faith by the same Spirit ; to another, the gifts of healing by the same Spirit ; to another, prophecy ; to another, discerning of spirits. But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as He will." Then the Apostle goes on to say, By one Spirit we are all baptized into one body, Christ. So that whatever gift we have, it is His Spirit working in us ; and all the diversity of operation are necessary to the perfect body. The foot cannot quarrel with the hand ; nor the ear with the eye ; " The eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee : nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you. Ye are the body of Christ." Oh, then, let us be more tender of each other's feelings, let us have more sympathy with each other's labours ! because, for spiritual gifts to be at warfare is to be at war with Christ and with ourselves : we have nothing to fear from warfare with the enemy, but we have everything to fear from warfare with the members of Christ. " There should be no schism in the body ; but the members should have the same care one for another." Wisdom and knowledge are beautiful, let us do them reverence ; Faith, and healing souls are divine, let us do them homage ; the Spirit of prophecy is God, let us not dare despise him. " The spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets," and thus it is we find God Incarnate in the

Representatives of Revelation: "God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all Churches of the saints." And there is nothing that can tend more to peace, and unity, and strength, than a just appreciation of the gifts of others.

At the Pentecost all these diversities of gifts were bestowed for the service of the ministry, as a guarantee for the future, and for the salvation of the world. (Acts ii.) Then, as I have said before, the necessary qualification of a Christian minister is that he should be spiritual, a duplex being, and his vocation is to make men spiritual; this may seem rather a Divine than a human prerogative; it is both, even as the Being by whom the work is wrought is both. If a servant of Christ be like the great spiritual representative of the spiritual economy, "filled with the Holy Ghost," "great in the sight of the Lord" (Luke i. 15), he will, like Him, "turn many to the Lord their God." And he will be, too, in this dark world what Christ proclaimed him to be, "A burning and a shining light" (John v. 35), referring evidently to the seven lamps in the tabernacle, which symbolized the seven Spirits before the throne (Rev. i. 4), which are the seven Spirits of the seven ages of the Church, One Eternal Spirit, but of the seven Churches. "Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning." If this be so, there will be a spiritual reciprocation, and congregations, neighbourhoods, peoples, and nations will become spiritual: "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His. And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but

the Spirit is life because of righteousness." (Rom. viii. 9—10.) The ministry of the Christian Church is an awful responsibility ; no better regulation of our human economy will be accepted of God in the place of souls : "In thy name we have done many wonderful works," will only meet with the response, "I never knew you : depart from me."

We have seen before, the judgments of Divine wrath falling upon the counterfeit, presumptuous, servant. The work of the Spirit and the fruits of the Spirit are so manifest, and peculiar, that they will always vindicate themselves against the pretension of vain externalism, and natural religion. My great aim is to make conspicuous the spiritual, true Church, "The kingdom of God," in holy, yet in bold contradistinction against merely a visible Church, and a nominal profession ; the peril of taking refuge in either is so great, that in this study of the New Testament my great care must still be to preserve sacred that distinction. But Oh, has not each one of us much reason to search ourselves whether we have the Spirit of Christ, and are indeed His ! My own soul has sometimes been deeply afflicted upon this question,—so much inconsistency, distrust, sensitiveness to wrong, fretful vexation because of wickedness, ingratitude, and unkindness : how unlike our great Example, whose greatness was of His own kingdom, and who could in consequence trample the world beneath His feet, as unworthy His regard. Let us look at ourselves again upon these points : the lines of Cowper should rouse us to reflection, "He has no hope, who

never had a fear, and he who never doubted of his state, he may perhaps, be too late." And the words of Christ from which I have quoted, even more so; they are solemn, read them again. (Matt. vii. 14—23.) "Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith: prove your own selves."

"The kingdom of God" within us is a mighty doctrine. "There be some standing here which shall not taste of death, till they see the kingdom of God." (Luke ix. 27.) Upon the Mount of Transfiguration the kingdom of God was really seen; but I think from the parallel passage in St. Mark (ix. 1) it was the Pentecost Christ referred to: "Till they have seen the kingdom of God come with power." "The kingdom of God is within you." And St. Paul said, "The kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." "Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness [by revelation], and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son." And the angel said to Mary, when he announced to her the birth of Christ, "He shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end." Reign, not a temporal monarch, but spiritually in the hearts of His people for ever. If this were not to be absolutely so, the prayer He taught His disciples would be a vagary, and not the uplifting of the soul of the believer: "Thy kingdom come: thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven."

That kingdom, although invisible, is still a sublime and a glorious reality, and as independent of material creation

as though that frame-work of the sacred glory had no existence.

Spiritual religion is not an ideal system of credulous minds, it is not a curiously wrought, intellectual theory, nor is it merely a passive concession of the understanding,—it is an indwelling of God, who changes the whole current of the natural mind, and elevates it in life and in death to the standard of His own exalted being. “Having a form of godliness, but denying the power, from such turn away.”

“Ever learning, and never able to come to a knowledge of the truth.” (2 Tim. iii. 3—7.) “But speaking the truth in love, may grow up unto him in all things, which is the head, even Christ.” (Eph. iv. 15.) “We are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and his Church.” (Ib. v. 30—32.)

Thirdly: I have to notice the character of Peter as the representative of the Church of this dispensation. I am not like too many who regard revelation simply as an historic record. I see in it foreshadows, set up as beacons for what was then future, and what are to be looked upon in the past as prophetic beacons of that which would come.

To reject prophetic type, is to repudiate revelation. We see clearly in the Prophet Jonah the Jewish Church, the ministry of Christ, and the Church of this dispensation after Him. And if this be not the true meaning of the history of Jonah, why is that history, or life of him in the Prophets at

all,—it would be a mere record of a past event? And so Peter was a representative of a body, and when God would set forth the mind of His Spirit in the representative, He can elucidate it, set forth to the body now present what was then in the future, by an individual, or by more than one, as He will: "I will meet with thee, and I will commune with thee from between the two cherubims, which are upon the ark of testimony." God is incarnate in His word, "hear Him." It is more than madness to think to defy God, to defy His Word: "Woe to him that striveth with his Maker!"

Then let us look at the character of Peter as a prophetic *bacon*, and what are the principal features which it presents to us? Two, in most glaring colours,—pride and unbelief. An impulsiveness and presumption, as opposed to humility and faith, as qualities can be. See Him in the first eventful record of His life given to us: "Peter answered Him and said, Lord, *if it be thou*, bid me come unto thee on the water. And he said, Come. But when he saw the wind boisterous, he was *afraid*; and beginning to sink, he cried, saying, Lord, save me. And immediately Jesus stretched forth his hand, and caught him, and said unto him, *O thou of little faith, therefore didst thou doubt?*" (Matt. xiv. 28—31.) This exhibition of infirmity, of Peter's incredulity, must strike forcibly every deeply-read Scripture reader; because to exhibit faith, to hold it up to the world as a Divine attainment, formed one grand point of Christ's ministry. We have seen this in the Centurion whose servant He healed; we have seen it in the Canaanitish woman, and in many other instances: and here

I would have you glance at it for a moment in the nobleman, whose son He healed. (John xlix. 53.) The father besought that "He would *come down*, and heal his son." To test his faith, Jesus said unto him, "Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe." The nobleman again urgently repeated, "Sir, *come down* ere my child die." Capernaum, where the child lay, was more than a day's journey from where they were; but the nobleman's faith wanted no Divine touch for his child, no sign, no wonder: "Jesus saith unto him, Go thy way, thy son liveth." He did so, and found the child healed! "And himself believed, and *his whole house*."

Oh, what a triumph of faith, for the Author of faith to hold up to an unbelieving world! "Faith is the gift of God." (Eph. ii. 8.) Then, surely, when He took the unwearying trouble, which we see He did, to induce and to develop faith in His Church, in instituting her; and throughout the whole of His ministry He had a right to expect faith, and, at the end of this dispensation, clustering fruits; but let us see if we find it in the life of the representative power. Because we may never lose sight of the emphatic words to the angel, or to the ambassador sent, of the third Church of the world's history: "To the angel of the Church of Pergamos write; These things saith he which hath the sharp sword with two edges. *I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth.*" (Rev. ii. 12—16.) Now, I feel if God were not the incarnate God of revelation, this undertaking would be an ignominious service; but since it is of Him, I proceed in faith.

Turn again to the sixteenth chapter of St. Matthew. After that Divine consecration of Peter, as the successor of Christ the High Priest, to the sacred office, we read, "From that time forth began Jesus to show unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day. Then Peter took him, and began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord : this shall not be unto thee."

Analyse this impetuous, hypocritical defence of his Master's life and cause. Peter took Him, I suppose imperavely commanded Him aside from the other disciples, and began to rebuke Him—to rebuke God ! What impious presumption was this. But he proceeded further still : "*This all not* be unto thee." Here Peter made himself the divine arbitrator, the supreme power,—"*This shall not.*" And what was the root of this which appears, at first sight, an unanimous courage ? Pride, that most latent, potent, ul, satanic disease in all the black category of human guilt. It has been said, humility is the parent virtue ; and pride, the parent vice ; and here we see this is so : "Get thee behind me, *Satan.*" Satan was the radical principle of Peter's zeal, the father of his dominating sin : "Thou art an offence unto me : for thou savourest not the things which be of God, but those that be of men." Here we see Peter, the chosen vessel of God's persisting grace and purpose, the very personification of Satan ; no amelioration of the personality, but "get thee

behind me, Satan." And so I have shown you before. In the revelation of the man of sin in our world, his characteristic will be pride,—an assumption of God: "Who exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God." In the son of perdition we understand this; in the revelation and culminating presumption of the Antichrist of the world, we understand this: but do we understand it in the disciple of Christ? do we understand it in him, who was to be henceforth the type, the image of his Master? No. The kingdom of God, in his estimation, should ever afterwards have been supreme.

A proud man is a being lost to all virtue; self-idolatry, the god of this world, has so hardened his heart, and prostrated his reason, and blinded his eyes, that he cannot estimate anything aright, he cannot appreciate anything that does not flatter his pride; his god is self; his aim is glorification; and anything that would mar that, or in any way clash with it, must be put down, even to the suppression and downfall of the kingdom of God itself. In Peter were not the seven evil qualities which were in Mary, but Satan in his manifold and complete nature. Was he herein a type of Rome which would spring out of the true, Apostolic Church, or a prefiguration of the very Rome of ourselves? A proud, ambitious, arrogant man is a noxious being; from a raging thirst for glory he is too besotted to think, or act soberly at all. A life of catering for human glory holds him back from that

honour which comes from God only. *He may, like Peter, learn wisdom by painful vicissitude*, but till he does, he is not a fit being to hold a Divine commission.

What is Rome, but dethroning God to enthrone self,—but dethroning Christ to enthrone self? To deny His kingdom in the hearts of man, is to deny Him; to place anything supreme above that, is to deny Him; this Peter would have done till after the Pentecost, when he learned the true nature of that kingdom, and estimated it rightly. It is not Rome, but the Rome of ourselves we have to fear; let it fall, or God will pass by in His glory to consume it: “There shall no man see me and live.” “I was alive without the law once; but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died.”

I do not say that other vile passions do not alike submerge the man, depose reason, and ally him to the great adversary of souls; but I am speaking now of the ruling passion of Peter—pride. This was the germ, and root, and growing cause of all that unbelief which the Saviour took such trouble to combat and to stem by striking at its root—pride. Thus we see how the Christian Church has slidden into Rome after all the trouble, and wisdom, and Divine teaching of her Head to prevent the fall, to avert the rise of Antichrist by that means. The teaching of the Eternal Spirit in the life of Nebuchadnezzar was just this: “Thou, O king, art this head of gold.” And it was the God of heaven who made him a king of kings, who gave him a kingdom, power, and strength, and glory; who put all things into his hand,

and made him ruler over them all. (Dan. ii.) But instead of giving heed to the caution of the vision, the legs of iron and feet of clay, emblems of admixture, weakness, he set up an image of gold himself, and in parade, display, presumption, and Satanic pride and despotism commanded all to be cast into a fiery furnace who would not worship him. This was Rome. But the vision of her in the fourth chapter is still more vivid, more developed; it sets forth the Antichrist of the world, the *personality*, pride, Satan. "I saw, and beheld a tree in the midst of the earth, and the height thereof was great. The tree grew, and was strong, and the height thereof reached unto heaven, and the sight thereof to the end of all the earth: the leaves thereof were fair, and the *fruit thereof much, and in it was meat for all*: the beasts of the field had shadow under it, and the fowls of the heaven dwelt in the boughs thereof, and all flesh was *fed of it*." This tree is the true Church, Christ "the tree of life," "the true vine," the Head of it; but "as the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me." And this is precisely what we find in the parabolical dream: "I saw in the visions upon my bed, and, behold, a watcher and an holy one came down from heaven; he cried aloud, and said thus, Hew down the tree, and cut off his branches, shake off his leaves, and scatter his fruit: let the beasts get away from under it, and the fowls from his branches." Mark well how this beautiful, flourishing tree, so beautifully described also by Ezekiel (xvii. 22—24), glides into Rome, "Nevertheless leave the stump of his roots in the

earth, even with a band of iron and brass, in the tender grass of the field ; and let it be wet with the dew of heaven, and let his portion be with the beasts in the grass of the earth : let his heart be changed from man's, and let a beast's heart be given unto him ; and let seven times pass over him." This is Antichrist, the beast of the world's history (Rev. xiii.) ; it is the beast, Rome (xvii.) ; it is the Babylon of ourselves (xviii.) ; three evil spirits, but one evil spirit.

"This matter is by the decree of the watchers, and the demand by the word of the holy ones : to the intent that the living may know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will, and setteth up *over it the basest of men.*" (Dan. iv.)

And see the further result, the culminating end of this vision. "Thou sawest till that a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces. Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshing-floor ; and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them : and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth." (Dan. ii. 34—35.) "At the same time my reason returned unto me. Now I Nebuchadnezzar praise and extol and honour the King of heaven, all whose works are truth, and his ways judgment ; and those that walk *in pride* he is able to abase." (Dan. iv. 36, 37.)

Do we now understand Peter's sin of pride ? It had so

blinded his eyes, deposed reason, fed his unbelief in Christ's spiritual kingdom, and so fed his belief in himself, and in the temporal glory he thought to be promoted to, that Christ designated that pride, the man who was the subject of it, Satan. "Get thee behind me, Satan : for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men." And let us not forget to bear in mind that this was Peter, the representative of ourselves. His gracious and Divine Teacher followed up the subject with lucid exhortation, and with still more gracious and glorious vision. "Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it. And whosoever will lose his life for *my sake* shall find it. For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? For the Son of man shall come in the *glory of his Father* with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works. Verily, I say unto you, There be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom." And then, in the next chapter (Matt. xvii.), what amazing condescension and gracious forbearance with their pride and unbelief! "Jesus taketh Peter, and James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into an high mountain apart, and was transfigured before them : and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light." This seemed rather a fulfilment of Daniel's prophecy than a glo-

rious manifestation of that which was still future. "One like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days." (Dan. vii. 13.) Did the disciples then believe? Were they then ready to take up their cross and follow Christ? Were they then ready to go forth upon their Divine commission, and to lose their lives for his sake? No; selfishness, the twin sister of pride rose immediately in Peter's mind. "Jesus, Master, it is good for *us* to be here: and let *us* make three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias: not knowing what he said." (Matt. xvii.; Luke ix.) Tabernacles simply mean here places for the Divine Presence and glory to rest in, as in the tabernacle in the wilderness; but the mind of the Spirit is very strongly expressive of Peter's real feeling upon the occasion. The word has the same meaning as booth in Jonah iv. 5, where tent, tabernacle, church, gourd, canopy of God's grace, is meant. Peter had forgotten the high vocation to which he was called, and would have created a little heaven for himself, and have left the world far behind. "It is good for *us* to be here." The voice of Jonah, who was Peter, was the same. "He made himself a booth, and sat under it, to see what would become of the city." The words of St. Luke are remarkable, and I believe refer to the present moment of time. "While Peter thus spake, there came a *cloud*, and overshadowed them: and they feared as they entered into the cloud." God is now about to bring a cloud upon the earth, over the Church. She will fear to enter into the cloud, but she need not. He has but one design in it, that Peter may

be awakened afresh to his great responsibility. "There a voice *out of the cloud*, saying, This is my beloved Son : *him*." Had the Apostolic Church, down to the present have heard Him, there would have been *no cloud* ; but, Peter, she is *now* proud and lifted up, and from it she hear the voice : "This is my beloved Son : hear him." hear His voice in the four Gospels I find it almighty inspiring, all-directing, all-holy. "Hear him." "sheep know my voice, and they follow me." O Church the living God, you do know His voice, follow him, him ! "Peter and they that were with him were heavy sleep : and *when they were awake*, they saw his gl (Luke ix. 32.) Read carefully the transfiguration as related by the three Evangelists ; it is full of meaning. (Matt. x Mark ix.) "When they were *awake*, they saw *his glory*."

We read in John vi. 15, "When Jesus therefore perceived that they would come and take him by force, to make him a king, he departed again into a mountain himself alone." Thus we see that the expectation of the Jews of a temporal kingdom was not greater than that of the disciples ; it was quite as difficult to divest the mind of the one of the idea as of the other. How in that mountain did the Redeemer of the world contrast the two kingdoms, did He there prayed, and meditated how He might deliver his disciples from the all-engrossing delusion which had taken possession of their minds. The 9th chapter of St. Mark is the most striking teaching I know in the New Testament upon the subject, save one.

which I shall notice later. The chapter opens with the record of the transfiguration ; then is narrated the casting out a deaf and dumb spirit, which His disciples could not do because of their unbelief. Then He foretold to them His death and resurrection, all of which seemed rather to stupify than to arouse them to action, to holy watchfulness and prayer, for immediately we find Christ inquiring of them, "What was it that ye disputed among yourselves by the way? But they held their peace : for by the way they had disputed among themselves, who should be the greatest. And he sat down and called the twelve, and saith unto them, If any man desire to be first, the same shall be last of all, and servant of all." He then told them, if they only received a little child in His name, they received not only Him, but His Father who sent Him. In obduracy, pride, and in an arrogant, dominating spirit they again replied, "Master, we saw one casting out devils in thy name : and we forbade him because he followeth not us." He again taught them meekness, humbleness, to be of a loving and quiet spirit, by saying, if they only gave a cup of cold water in His name to any because they belong to Christ, they should in no wise lose their reward. And whosoever should offend any who believed on Him, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he were cast into the sea.

And then His Divine zeal seemed to wake up afresh to the awful responsibility committed to His disciples, to the danger of their swerving from the Divine rubric, to the loss of souls that would be involved if they did so, and to the great con-

demnation that would accrue to themselves if they failed, and then, as I have said before, he uttered language, some of the most awful in all His teaching. As though He had said, Trifle no longer with the fallen passions of your sinful natures, with pride, envy, jealousy, love of display, power, greatness, cease from oppression, persecution, hatred, malice, revenge, arrogance, and presumption; cut off all these, even though it be like severing a limb from the body, or plucking out the very organs of sense; cut it off, even in this life it will lead you on to hell, where the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched; and this strong emphatic language He three times repeated, that He might set at rest for ever their disputings about who should be the greatest; who might name the name of Christ, and yet follow not them; who should take the precedence, and who should be servant of all. Grace is good, but if the graces and gifts of the Spirit lose their design, their Divine savour, how can the world be saved by grace? Have this holy unction in yourselves, and have peace one with another. Pride is the master passion of the soul, but Peter must be crucified that Christ may reign. "Cut it off."

I ask the Church, has she cut off all these unholy excrescences? has she heard this voice of the Son of God from the many clouds that have swept over her? If she has, well; if she has not, I would ask her to listen to one more voice, it is His; and if she has never heard Him before, or really given due heed before, let her do so now, as the voice is about to break from a black, surcharged, cloud; it is a voice from the expelled Jewish Church, it is a voice from hell,

"I pray thee, therefore, Father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house : For I have *five* brethren ; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment." (Luke xvi.) This was the hell Christ cautioned His disciples to avoid ; to cut off all that could lead to it. Has the Church of this dispensation done so ? Has she cut off pride, arrogance, and self-idolatry ? Has she followed the example of the perfect Being who came to be her model, and to raise her to His own standard ? I feel that it is cruel, ignominious in me to say, that the Church of this third dispensation was one of the *five* brethren of the rich man in hell, but I say it, because I believe it : but I would add here, that the third vial about to be poured upon her is of grace, love, and mercy ; to teach her, to help her to cut off what offends, to awaken her conscience to a deep sense of sin, to awaken her to diligence, to labour ; to point her afresh to her perfect model, God-man, to His teaching, to the deep things of time and eternity contained in that teaching. And this leads me to another part of that teaching upon the subject under discussion, which I must notice here. I do not say that the hell of the rich man of the Jewish Church is consummated in this world, but cut off from Christ, it is begun to be consummated hereafter.

" Thou art pride ; that fatal sin
By which high angels fell,
From innocence and joy in heaven,
To punishment in hell."

Tales in Rhyme for Little Children.

“Then came Peter to him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me and I forgive him? till seven times? Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven.” And then He set forth His meaning by a parable, which I believe to be like all His other parables, not only beautiful in its primary sense, but Omniscient, and prophetic in its secondary meaning. “The *kingdom of heaven* is likened unto a certain king, which would take account of his servants. And one was brought to him who could not pay the debt he owed; so that he fell at his Lord’s feet, saying, Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. Then the Lord of that servant was moved with compassion, and forgave him the debt.” Did not God thus forgive the priesthood He so graciously chose for His purpose? His purpose was unchangeable, His grace persisting. Peter was the chosen vessel of His purpose, but let Peter’s character be analysed, only glanced at fairly, and impartially; and throughout the early part of his life, it is one of the most volatile, trifling, presumptuous, and cowardly in the history of the Church. Did God set it there in its true colouring as a beacon?—or to be sainted, to be deified by the devil, so as to blind men’s eyes, to obscure their true model, and to make him a stumbling-block to many? Let us be honest with ourselves, and know that he is the representative of ourselves, of every one of God’s vile, unfaithful servants. Do I exclude myself that I venture to teach others? No. It is just because God has taught me the

depth of sin, my own foul leprous condition before Him, my proneness in ease and prosperity to swerve from Him, from His service, from the commission He has committed to me; I say because He has taught me this by correction, by judgment, by faithfulness, by lovingkindness, that I am enabled to point the Church to the judgment about to overtake her, to the lovingkindness and faithfulness of her God.

I say then, this parable was prophetic, as the Church; does she now forgive as she has been forgiven? Is she in a loving spirit bringing others under the gourd of God's grace, which she has so long enjoyed herself? Is her work theoretical, and secular, or is it practical? Glance back at the book of Jonah, as God foresaw it, and as He now sees it. (Chap. iv.)

"The same servant went out, and found one of his fellow servants, which owed him an hundred pence: and he laid hands on him, and took him by *the throat*, saying, Pay me that thou owest." The servant besought him as he had besought his lord, but he would not listen, but cast him into prison till he should pay the debt. Is this the spirit of the Church, known only to God? Is she liberally and broadly extending the kingdom of God by gathering in souls by forgiveness, as her Lord has forgiven her, as brothers and sisters in Christ, as all members of His body?—or has His kingdom now no supremacy in the world, not known, not appreciated? The cure of souls is an awful responsibility. Those who undertake it should renounce the world for life's short day, conse-

crate their time to the study of the Scriptures, so wash in that molten sea of the Spirit of Truth that they should be clean themselves, and so able to pronounce every cleansed leper clean, because the time was to come when the King would take account of His servants. "O thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou desiredst me: shouldest not thou also have had compassion on thy fellow servant, even as I had pity on thee? And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him." I believe this to be the sentence and the portion of one of the *five* brothers of the rich man in hell. As I have said before, mine would be an ignominious service, if it were not that God is incarnate in His Word, and can speak from what phase of it He will, and when He will.

"So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses." God is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity; His perfection is high, and far above finite thought; we cannot trifle with Him, we cannot swerve from the very letter and spirit of His Word without bringing down swift destruction.

But how can we understand this parable of the king, who took account of his servants, with what Christ taught just before, as to how we are to deal with our brethren when they offend us? (Matt. xviii. 15—17.) "Go and tell thy brother his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee,

Thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the Church: but if he neglect to hear the Church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican." Christ was speaking here of a person within the pale of the true Church, yet reprobate to the *Divine* law, one who had abandoned himself to his besetting sin, of one whose reason and judgment were so blinded, so warped, that they were incapable of right acting: of such an one Christ did *not* say, *Do not* forgive him; He did not say, Injure such an one, but simply, "Let him be unto *thee* as a heathen man and a publican," that is, as a brother in Christ who has erred and sinned exceedingly; eat with him, forgive him, but seek not any more his private friendship,—he is *your* enemy, he will betray it. How can you cultivate the friendship of a person who has done everything to injure you in his power, and now seeks your friendship because he can do no more? No; God Himself knew in such a case there is an overreaching justice, a Divine justice, that must be satisfied. "Let that man be unto *thee* as a heathen man and a publican." The whole tenour of Scripture is the same. "Them that sin rebuke before all, that others may fear." "Note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed. Yet count him not as an *enemy*, but admonish him as a *brother*." The Scriptures also make a marked distinction between aggressive and defensive warfare: the one is Satanic,

the other is lawful. "Whosoever is angry with his brother *without* a cause shall be in danger of the judgment." "Strive not with a man without cause, if he have done thee no harm." Our Saviour has nowhere taught us, that having expelled a serpent from our bosom, we are bound to take it back again.

Thus our blessed Lord made it very plain how we are to deal with offences, always to forgive; but, that Divine justice may be vindicated, to rebuke openly when need be. The instituted Church of Christ is to forgive as she has been forgiven, and if she does not, God will rebuke her, that His justice in judgment may be vindicated.

But turn yet again to Peter's character. After Jesus had eaten with His disciples the last passover, He said to them, "All ye shall be offended because of me this night. Peter answered and said unto him, Though all men shall be offended because of thee, yet will I never be offended. Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, That this night, before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me *thrice*. Peter said unto him, Though I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee." (Matt. xxvi. 34, 35.) Mark here his almost unparalleled self-confidence; he was not fear-stricken with awe at His Lord's assertion; he did not ask Him as an Omnipotent Being to keep him from falling; not one supplication for grace ascended to the throne of God; but Peter did *then* deny Christ by affirming what he said was a lie. I have said before, Peter's character was a prophetic one, "This *night*, before the cock crow, thou

shalt deny me *thrice*." What did it mean prophetically? The third night of the Church's history will soon close upon her, before the cock crow; before the dawn of the fourth-day dispensation, will she have denied Christ *thrice*? I know she will answer, "Though all shall be offended because of thee, yet will I never be offended. Though I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee." But have I not shown you that the Christian Church has denied Him already? His kingdom is not *now* held in supreme estimation, to say nothing of the world; not by the Church,—it occupies the *very lowest* position in the hearts and minds of men, it is almost lost in the Babylon of ourselves. Her night of trial is fast approaching; she must now follow the kingdom of her Lord to the hall of judgment, to Pilate's bar. Will she *sleep* for sorrow? Will she follow Him *afar off*? Will she be ashamed when that kingdom is derobed of temporal sovereignty and glory? Will she say then, "We have no king but Cæsar?" Will she deny Christ then? Let her beware, the devil will try to overwhelm by power and *sudden* assault what will not be taken captive by him at his will: "Satan hath desired to have you. But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not." O great Intercessor before the throne! pray for thy Church before she enters that judgment-hall, that her faith fail not, and teach her to be humble, lowly, to pray for herself,—“Pray that ye enter not into temptation.” Christ's words to Peter are very remarkable, “When thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren.” Could he only be taught,

made fit for his great commission by being left of God to fall? Could the proud man only be submerged, "Little faith" be made strong, so as to strengthen others only by being left of God to deny His cause before an accusing world? "Again he denied with an oath, I do not *know* the man. Then began he to curse and to swear, saying, I know not the man."

Perhaps with the exception of David, the latter part of whose life has precisely the same prophetic meaning as Peter's, there is not a more striking proof of human weakness, of the subtilty and power of Satan over man when left for a moment of God than this: Peter's preaching, teaching, profession, his confession of faith, of love, his oath of allegiance, his pledge of life even to death in service, in adherence, all fallen, "the Christ of God" denied! O Church of the living God, I say, as you approach that judgment-hall of trial; as you approach the bar of Pilate, to hear the interrogation, "What is truth?" Beware! Remember, God was in Christ, and God is in you, and you are to witness the same good confession before the bar of the world as He did. The Christian Church has denied Christ openly, and shamelessly: "I do not *know* the man." Oh, miserable, awful ignorance; I know Him whenever and wherever I meet Him. Of Him it was prophesied, "I will set him up on high, because he hath *known* my name."

The winged songsters of the morn will herald the dawn of the fourth-day dispensation; will you have to remember with

Peter the word of Jesus, "Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice?" Remember now, weep bitterly now, confess now that you have denied Him; that in the proud, naughty spirit of Antichrist, already *three* times in the world's history thou hast denied Him; that His kingdom is now in the most miserable subjection to the world; that His cause is unknown in its own intrinsic, high, holy, and glorious blessedness. "Peter remembered the *word* of Jesus, which *aid* unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice." Oh, it is a blessed thing when God brings our sin to remembrance, when He stops us in our career of sin, of presumption, of trifling, of unfaithfulness to Him; when He takes us up afresh to a due sense of our very great responsibilities; when we hear His voice audibly, and give ear to it reverently, "When thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren."

We must now look at another phase of the character of Peter, passing over the intervening time between his denial of our Lord and the Pentecost; his comportment to the time of the Ascension has been already noticed. It is not likely, after his last Ordination Sermon, so minutely detailed by St. John, that he ever again returned to any secular occupation; for in the first chapter of Acts, we find all the Apostles gathered together for prayer, and in anxious waiting for the gift of the Spirit, which had been promised. There, too, we find Peter ordaining an Apostle in the place of Judas, and his exhortation upon the occasion shows how truly he had waked

up to the importance of his Divine commission. "He was numbered with us, and had obtained part of this ministry." "From which Judas by transgression fell, that he might go to his own place." Did Peter remember here his own great transgression? the place he had escaped through the prayer of the Brother, Friend, God-man, whom he had deserted in His last extremity, and denied at His last earthly tribunal? Perhaps he did, for the word "denied" seemed still to linger in his thought, to rest upon his tongue, "Ye denied the Holy One and the Just." (iii. 14.)

But as I have said, let us pass over the intervening moment, and look at his character as it flashes upon us in all the light of heaven, in all the power of an Omnipotent God, in all the life of "The Prince of life."

I cannot here extract from his preaching without marring the miraculous inspiration, without interrupting as it were "the rivers of living water" which flowed from his lips: the ancient river of the Patriarchal Church seemed to roll afresh (Acts iii. 13), the waters of the Mosaic economy seemed impregnated with new life (iii. 22), and all the floodgates of the streams and rivers of the prophets seemed open as he spake. (ii. 29—34; xvi. 17; 2 Pet. i.) If you would grasp this marvellous inspiration you must read connectedly Acts, 2nd, 3rd, and 4th chapters, together with his Epistles. "The multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all

things common. And with great power gave the Apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus : and great grace was upon them all." This was the result of the coming of the kingdom of God ; the restitution of all things seemed at the door, and the end of all things *was at hand* ; but that kingdom receded.

But, in speaking here of Peter as a prophetic character, what did that effusion of the Spirit mean ? It spake to us of one still in the future. "They were all filled with the Holy Ghost." "Having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, He hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear." "Then Peter, filled with the Holy Ghost." Yes, I say this was a glorious guarantee of a still more glorious future, as seen in Ezek. xxxvii. ; Rev. vii. and xi. chapters. But should I be asked, how is it to be brought about ? upon what condition received ? I would answer, absolutely by *Obedience*. I do not believe, as some foolish people do, that God will pour down His Spirit upon Satan embodied in man, that He will abrogate all His institutions, and work without means ; He did not do so with Peter, His Spirit strove long with him. "I am a sinful man, O Lord." God left him to fall to convince him of sin ; He let him in the *fourth* watch of the night walk upon the billowy deep to induce faith ; He spake to him by the expulsion of the Jewish Church, and by Judas, to show him the hell he had escaped ; He met him for the last time upon the shores of Tiberias to give him faith in Himself as an instrument by a miraculous

draught of fishes, by sealing the bond of eternal friendship, and receiving from him the oath of allegiance, and assurance of his love. And then what do we find? Peter, penitent, believing, and at his post of office, waiting for the Holy Ghost to crown his purpose. Then he—shall I say for the first time, or for the first time truly effectually—tried the keys of the kingdom of God, which had been committed to him, no further miracle than that which had been promised to the end of the world (John xiv. 16—26), and the heavenly portals flew back, and multitudes entered in. Peter did not then say, that means were abrogated, that the Word of God was abrogated, that preaching would ultimately be abrogated, and that the world would be saved by a miraculous baptism. No. “Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the Word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever. For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: but the Word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you.” (1 Epist. i. 23—25.) “As new born babes desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby.” (ii. 2.) This may seem very matter-of-fact proceeding; the work of preaching salvation to the whole world may appear impossible to those who think the Church is now to be caught up to heaven, and the countless millions of the unregenerate to be damned; but let them look again at the Divine Rubric; the converted

Apostle left, and, in *obedience*, difficulties will become plain. "Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly ; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind ; neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock. Be clothed with *humility* : for God *resisteth* the *proud*, and giveth grace to the humble. *Humble* yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time."

And then the mind of the Apostle passed on to the long vista of years before the mighty embassy of his office should be completed. "One day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is long-suffering to usward, not willing that any should perish, but that *all* should come to repentance." He knew this to be the great end of the gospel, and that God could not be diverted from His purpose by the lordly, impulsive domination of sinful man.

If we would see how innate it is in man to arrogate to himself the grace of God, and to despise others, we see it in Peter, when, after all the gracious teaching of his Lord upon the subject of his commission, he was obliged to be further instructed by a supernatural vision before the Gentiles could be counted worthy of life, before he could believe in God's purpose of saving the world. "I have never eaten anything that is common or unclean." A second voice, more sovereign if not more imperative than the first, must issue from the court of heaven, before the servant would heed his Lord's

command. "What God hath cleansed, that call not *thou* common." Still Peter doubted in himself what the vision which he had seen could mean ; till Cornelius, a Gentile, a Roman, but "a devout man, and one that feared God with all his house, which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God alway," fell at his feet to worship, to ask what he could best do for the glory of God. That living epistle of the Spirit, that noble pillar in the temple of God, of the grace of God, elicited the palpable truth, "God hath showed me that I should not call any man common or unclean." "Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons : but in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him." "While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word. And they of the circumcision which believed, were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost." (Acts x.)

The defence of Peter in the next chapter, when he was accused of the Church for communion with the Gentiles is grand and imposing, as it stands before us in connection with the Divine calling of the Gentiles. "The Spirit bade me go with them, nothing doubting." "The Holy Ghost fell on them, as on us at the beginning. Forasmuch then as God gave them the like gift as he did unto us who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, what was I, that I could withstand God?" Reader, read again these two grand chapters upon Peter's commission, Acts x., xi.

Compare this Divine, beautiful, and glorious calling of the Gentile world, with the third and fourth chapters of Jonah : "The word of the Lord came unto Jonah the *second* time, saying, Arise, go unto Nineveh, that great city, and preach unto it the preaching that I bid thee." And there can be no doubt but that Peter, this same Jonah, Bar-jona, son of Jona, of Jona, did preach unto Nineveh the preaching which God bade him ; for his first, most beautiful epistle, that faithful and holy exhortation to the Church, was written from Babylon. (v. 13.) As I say, there can be no doubt that he preached the gospel to the whole of Babylonia, to the whole region round about ; and this was so, that the ancient prophecy might be fulfilled to the letter.

In closing this subject of the prophetic character of Peter, let us pause again to inquire if his great commission has been carried out. No. He has gone a day's journey into the city ; but he has swerved from his vocation, is very angry because God is gracious, merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness. He has made himself a Church, and is sitting under its shadow to see what will become of the great city of Babylon, while Antichrist is strengthening himself to blast, like an east wind, the head of Jonah. The Papacy herself may fall, but the devil, in our world *now*, will not. "Nineveh was a great city, of three days' journey," and for unfaithfulness Peter must now compass it with the Gospel trumpet, till the walls thereof do fall. "Thou hast had pity on the gourd, for the which thou hadst not laboured, neither madest it

grow ; which came up in a *night*, and perished in a *night*." I do not think St. Peter ever did fulfil his commission as the Apostle of the Gentiles, but that St. Paul superseded him in it ; and that that was typical of the failure of the priesthood of this dispensation not fulfilling their commission. The whole chapter of Galatians ii. is most clear and noble upon the subject. Mark the emphatic distinction : "He that wrought *effectually* in Peter to the apostleship of the circumcision, the same was mighty in me toward the Gentiles." And St. Paul goes on to say that Peter withdrew, separated himself, and would not eat with the Gentiles, "fearing them of the circumcision ;" and, therefore, he says, "I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed."

Here we meet again the fearful, unbelieving, contending Peter. Peter must be crucified with Christ, and then his purified spirit will rise the bright, glorious exemplification of his Divine Master which we have seen him become.

It may be deemed a bold assertion to say all this was prophetic, but I am sure time will prove it was. As I have said before, mine would be an ignominious service, if it were not that God is incarnate in His Word. I feel this, and His messenger retires humbly, leaving Him only on the field : "I will *fight* with them with the sword of my mouth." "These things saith he that hath the seven spirits of God : " these seven spirits are the one Eternal Spirit of the seven ages. He who purchased the Spirit for the Church, can, in a moment, withdraw His power, and then

where would be puny, rebel man? "I saw a great star fall from heaven, burning as it were a lamp." For correction, to rouse to vigilance; not to die, only as a numerical body, but to rise afresh, to burn in brighter *glory* when her night of correction shall break in everlasting day. Betrothed Bride of the Lamb, thou art "born of God," born to return to Him; know, estimate rightly thy position, thy power, thy light, thy life, and thou canst never die! "Thou art born of God," and "whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith."

It is marvellous how a Church could have been founded upon St. Peter,—upon the weak, sinful, fallen Peter: "O thou of little faith;" "Get thee behind me Satan;" "Satan hath desired to have you, but I have prayed for thee." The temple of God, the holy city, the New Jerusalem, built upon St. Peter,—upon him who, upon every occasion when courage and action were required, was afraid, beginning to sink, he cried "Lord, save me!"—upon St. Peter, who, in the dark hour of the powers of darkness, began to curse and to swear, saying, "I know not the man!"—upon St. Peter, whose understanding was so obtuse that he could scarcely be made to believe his calling at all. Is it possible that theological students, that even a spurious priesthood can so err in knowledge, that truth can be so perverted by man's instigations, that man can be so dead and buried in the elements of earth, in the wreck and ruin of the fall as to rise up a somnambulist, as it were a very spectre from the confines of Hades, and

build a Church, his hope of salvation, upon a foundation against which the gates of hell did prevail, and which would have been hurled to everlasting perdition had not Peter been a stone fitly framed together, through the Spirit upon Jesus Christ the chief corner stone? The Church of St. Peter is now a miserable wreck and ruin,—diseased, foul, leprous, always falling, yet having her eyes open; being of human structure only, it will ever be subject to decay, although the Antichrist within her may rise and assert himself in a thousand different forms.

Awake, thou old man, thou somnambulist of this terrene sphere, thou ghostly spectre from the regions of the dead. “Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.” (Eph. v. 14.) How sure, how hopeful, how glorious in contrast is the foundation of the believing Church. “Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.” (1 Cor. iii. 11.)

It is very easy to see how Rome rose out of the true Church, how man in his pride and self-idolatry superseded Christ, his Master, Redeemer, and Creator! Yes, she was the offspring of guilt,—of that sin, pride, which because uncondemned by the world, and receiving no sentence at its bar, comes immediately under Divine condemnation, and is in its full development even in this life. “In danger of hell fire.” It is the Rome of ourselves we have to fear; pride and Rome are one. We have to fear that pride which is casting the glory of the world a stumblingblock before the

true Israel, which by it is obscuring the kingdom of God. "Lading himself with thick clay." It is Antichrist who does this, and we have everything to fear from his usurpation of God in ourselves. In that holy, consecrated temple which should be filled with the glory of God only: "I gave her space to repent of her fornication; and she repented not. Behold I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they repent of their deeds. And I will kill her children with death; and *all* the Churches shall know that I am he which *searcheth the reins and hearts.*"

It was an artful device of the devil to transmigrate himself into a Church, and to found that visible temple of his invisible being upon St. Peter. By it a great anti-Christian system rose on the one hand, and on the other, the true Church to avoid that corruption, in her zeal to reject error has rejected truth, and thereby been made timid, weak, fearful to establish her rightful prerogative; and she has, too, thereby been rent into factions,—her oneness of organization, which was strength, has been shattered; her clearness, and her glory dimmed by compromise, controversy, dispute, difficulty, and sin. Oh, let the *whole body* of the true Church resume in oneness her staff of office, and her mitre of dignity in the fear of God, not fearing the high order of apostolical succession, but imitate more closely the example after the Pentecostal baptism, and walk more circumspectly in her paths.

CHAPTER XI.

CHRIST'S MINISTRY.

BEFORE leaving the subject of our Saviour's ministry on earth, I must for a moment examine our title-deeds to the Gospel phase of Revelation, and, perhaps, I cannot do better than selecting for my ground of argument St. Paul's wide and expansive words, "Christ Jesus, who of God made unto us wisdom and righteousness, and sanctification and redemption." (1 Cor. i. 30.) What do we want more? Let us look at Christ in these four blessed relations to ourselves, and first as Wisdom.*

Contrast an enlightened, intelligent Christian with a savage, enter into the detail of their minds; the one intelligent, admiring, believing observer of all the laws of creation, of Revelation, of Providence, of nature, and of God; he sees them all governed by an eternal power that nothing can alter, that nothing can jar; he is also a strict, precise observer of all the social laws of our moral nature; he will not do violence to them if he were an irresponsible

* It is not the writer's intention to enter largely upon the mental doctrines of the New Testament. Should her life be spared, a volume now in MSS. will be published upon them.

is love and sacred conscientiousness to his neighbour ; from his knowledge of his relation to his God ; he himself to be the subject of a fallen economy, and sees contradistinction to himself, a holy, high, and exalted and his aspirations after God raise him more and more standard he had raised for himself ; and from day to advances in virtue and in faith. "The inspiration of mighty giveth him understanding." (Job xxxii. 8.)

At the mind of the savage : "Having the understanding darkened," no "light of life" has ever dispelled the darkness of chaotic night ; no ray of Divine light pierces his vision ; no vital spark of heavenly love warms his heart or throbs upon his stony heart ; he knows no law but that of his carnal nature, and that law is sin, sin in its self. The link of Divine wisdom, snapped at the Fall, has never been reunited ; and having no knowledge of God he is a being detached from Him. "O Lord, how are thy works ! a brutish man knoweth not ; neither the fool understand this." (Ps. xcii. 5, 6.) At the Fall, when Christ stood in the breach, man's reason would have been prostrated to the level of the beast.

Nebuchadnezzar was a type of that deposed state. "Let the heart be changed from man's, and let a beast's heart be put into him ; and let seven times pass over him. At the end of the days, I, Nebuchadnezzar, lifted up mine eyes to heaven, and mine *understanding* returned unto me." His confession, thanksgiving, and ascription of praise to

God, the result of the return of the mental ray, are evidence of the spiritual reality. "I blessed the Most High, and I praised and honoured him that liveth for ever. I Nebuchadnezzar praise and extol and honour the King of heaven, all whose works are truth, and his ways judgment." The short history of that most extraordinary typical character, as given in the second, third, and fourth chapters of Daniel, should be read connectedly to grasp comprehensively this subject of a fallen and restored being; mind fallen, reason fallen, spirit fallen, body fallen, soul fallen, and all as divinely and as gloriously restored as though they had never fallen. And how? By God striving with the conscience till it was convinced of the beastliness of sin, and of the holiness of God. O let us beware how we "grieve the Spirit," so as to cause Him to depart from us. A being like the heathen monarch with reason dethroned, and spirit fallen, is, I think, the most abject, stoical being in the realm of humanity. It may not be apparent to the world that he is God's enemy, but every under current of his nature is really streaming against him. And how sovereign the fiat, how omnipotent the mandate, that bid spirit and right judgment abdicate their throne. "This matter is by the decree of the watchers, and the demand by the word of the holy ones: to the intent that the living may know that the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of man, and giveth it to whomsoever he will, and setteth over it the basest of men." (iv. 17.) Oh, I say, let us beware how we provoke that dethronement; let that "*stump* of his

roots in the earth" be our beacon now before it be too late. The Divine wisdom, light, and life in Daniel are finely contrasted over against the darkness of the Antichrists, of the whole body of astrologers, sorcerers, and Chaldeans of Babylon. And if the whole book be read with the purpose of catching this phase of it, the subject at issue will be grasped with great profit to the student who shall thus peruse it.

"Faith cometh by hearing," and life cometh by hearing through the understanding; the mind and soul act in concert. "Understandest thou what thou readest? How can I except some man should guide me?" Man must be instructed,—“Philip preached unto the eunuch, Jesus,” and immediately “he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.” The knowledge of God in Christ our Saviour and Redeemer, and a knowledge of ourselves as lost without Him, is the most profound wisdom that man can be taught; and thus it was that Solomon described Wisdom and Christ One personality, One (Prov. viii.). “Salvation is of the Lord.” This is the sum and substance of Revelation, and, therefore, one of the first and highest places that Christ should occupy in our minds, should be as the Being through whom we received that Revelation and a knowledge of God thereby. The gift and return of the Eternal Spirit to our world were the purchase of His blood, and the Bible was the work of that purchased life and power. “Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.” “In him was life, and the life was the

light of men." But it would be in vain to have a life interest in a large estate if the title-deeds were treacherously concealed, and we had no knowledge of the bequest ; the heir to the inheritance might die without the benefit which the testator had so nobly proposed for him. Our great Testator died, but He left us two Testaments of His will—of Divine bequests, wisely executed, legally witnessed by God, and by men appointed before of Him. The spleen of the devil was not only against that Testament in its going forth, but his spleen has been against it ever since, to bring it into discredit, disuse, to annihilate it, treacherously to conceal it, so that the Church which derives its existence from it might become extinct. For that orb of light, is light, and warmth, (Luke xxiv. 32), and sustenance, and life to her.

Then in three ways Christ was made unto us Wisdom. First, as the Restorer of wisdom ; secondly, He was Himself a great Teacher of wisdom ; and thirdly, as having left a great Teacher in His name.

First, as the Restorer of wisdom. "God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise ; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty ; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are : that no flesh should glory in his presence. But *of him* are ye in Christ Jesus, who *of God* is made unto us wisdom." Then it is not only that God in us, through Christ, is our wisdom,

but it is God in us, through Christ, is wisdom, the very personality Solomon so grandly described. "I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one." Christ was the consecrated Temple of God, and through Him, in Him, we become partakers of the Divine nature, and then God in us is wisdom. "Of God are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom." Oh, this complexity of natures! It is wisdom. God in us is wisdom. "Born of God." Without this new birth we cannot be wise. "Born of water and of the Spirit," which I have shown you means born of the Word and of the Eternal Spirit, which is in that Word. "Christ loved the church, and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word." (Eph. v. 26.) I do not believe that a person can be sanctified or saved without in some way coming, or at some time having come, in contact with the Word. "The Word was God." That is, the Author of the Word, the God Incarnate of the Word, Christ, or "the Spirit of Truth," was God, just as the second and third persons of the Holy Trinity were God. "The same was in the beginning with God." Do we now understand how Christ was the Restorer of wisdom? Palpably, as the Restorer of God to our nature, He was the Restorer of wisdom.

Knowledge and Divine light in the Scriptures are often synonymous terms. "The entrance of thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple." "If the light which is in thee be darkness, how great shall that dark-

ness be." That is, if the natural reason be darkened by error, how dense, how impenetrable, shall that obscuration of hell be ! God, in His omnipotent power, can quicken, can pierce ; but He can, too, take away the Spirit of Truth, that He strive no longer.

"In the Word was life ; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness ; and the darkness comprehendeth it not." (John i. 4, 5.) The first act of creation was to impart, or to communicate, that Divine life and light ; they are now synonymous terms, as light and knowledge are synonymous, or as wisdom and God are synonymous. "The Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. And God said, Let there be light : and there was light. And God saw the light that it was good : and God divided the light from the darkness." (Gen. i.) This was that grand and glorious impartment or communication of spiritual life and light reproclaimed and revealed by St. John, for the natural lights of the heavens were not set in the firmament till the fourth day. I said, revealed by St. John, because that communication of the Divine nature was revelation ; and the manifestation of God in Christ was a still further revelation, a retaking of our world a possession to God, and a giving to our world God for an eternal possession. "We speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory." (1 Cor. ii. 7.) Hence the Word, or the God Incarnate in the Word, is the Revealer of that which was before mystery. The warfare between truth and error is that mystery ; that warfare might

have existed in spirit only, but God, for some wise purpose we do not know of, has instituted it in material creation. He called all creation into being expressly to be the organ or medium of that warfare. (Col. i. 14—18, 20.) The God, high, holy, just, and true, is at open warfare with the devil ; and every creature who is not for Him is against Him. In the human family there is not a neutrality, and hence the word *mystery*, so lucidly employed. “Without controversy great is the mystery of godliness : God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.” (1 Tim. iii. 16.) Who can compass that verse ? In it is contained one-half of the science of this mystery. God in Christ at one stroke, the Conqueror of the devil, the Redeemer, and therefore the legal possessor of the realm of universal space, Himself the Restorer and the restoration. “Behold, I am alive for evermore ; and have the keys of hell and of death.” (Rev. i. 18.) “Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ : for the accuser of our brethren is cast down. And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony.” (Rev. xii. 10—12.) “Justified in the Spirit.” It is an immense expression ; it will extend throughout time. My knowledge of God at this moment by His Word is all the evidence I want, to know that He was in Christ. “Justified in the Spirit.” That is, evidenced to the world in all ages by the restoration of the Spirit. The Pen-

tecost was the great public jubilee of that restoration. (Mark ix. 1.) But track further the *mystery* at issue. "Unto you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God: but unto them that are *without*, all these things are done in parables." (Mark iv. 11.) What a broad demarcation, what a sovereign severance! Within, and without the kingdom of God. Aliens or friends, wise or foolish, soldiers of Christ or of the devil. St. Paul prayed that all might come to an understanding, and to an acknowledgment of "the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ." And the knowledge of this mystery, as given to the Church by John, is so lucid, solemn, and momentous, that I cannot help thinking all highly culpable who do not enter heart and soul into the warfare with the wicked one, in whatever way he may present himself. He may at one time assault us by power, by subtilty, by sudden assault; at another, by lulling us into ease and inaction, into a perilous peace, into the bands of death; but in all it is the devil. "Write the mystery of the seven stars." These are the seven Spirits, or the One Eternal Spirit in ourselves combating with him, with the "Mystery, Babylon." Oh, let us be more faithful, more humble, more courageous! When the seventh angel shall sound in the seventh, the last-day dispensation, this mystery of God will be finished (Rev. x. 7), then each one will receive the reward of faithful stewardship. Let us pray more for "the Spirit of Truth," to combat the spirit of error, him, who "is a liar, and the father of it." And, oh, let us ever remember

It is God in us who is the combatant, and who will be the conqueror. "That was the true light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world." "I am the light of the world." God in Christ was the Restorer of His own nature into our world, and that Divine Person always remains, Truth, Light, and Life. He is *in* us wisdom. "Whoso findeth me findeth life, and shall obtain favour of the Lord. But he that sinneth *against me* wrongeth his own soul: all they that hate me love death." God is wisdom; and if He dwell in us, He is to us wisdom, through Christ. "One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all." This complexity of our being is a great mystery. "Great is the mystery of godliness." We are duplex beings. If we are "born of God," can we love a unique being? a being all animal, dead to Him? It seems very difficult to love death, but "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Oh, then, let us try more to warm the cold embrace of death that so clings round us, by love! Do we now understand St. Paul, when he said, "of God are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom"?

Secondly, Christ was made unto us wisdom as a great Teacher of wisdom. Take the subject of ethics: did ever any ancient philosopher, any doctor of the law, any learned master in Israel treat it as He did? He went to the root of the matter, and magnified the law by putting into it the vitality

of the Gospel. "They shall be all taught of God. *Every* man therefore that hath heard, and hath *learned* of the Father, cometh unto me." Come to Him as Nicodemus did : "Rabbi, we know that thou art a *teacher* come from God : for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him." The miracles of healing, and the gift of life, were the sequence of the Divine wisdom He taught. "The words that I speak unto you are spirit, and they are life." And thus it was, when that sublime Sermon upon the Mount was finished, in which was propounded to the multitudes the doctrines of morality : "They were astonished at his doctrine : for he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes." And again : we read, "He taught them in their synagogue, insomuch that they were astonished, and said, Whence hath his man this wisdom, and these mighty works ?" Mighty works are always the result of true wisdom, and thus the embodiment of it could say, "Wisdom is justified of her children." And again : scanning the great and glorious things of His kingdom, He could say, "The queen of the south came from the uttermost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon ; and, behold, a greater than Solomon is here."

In teaching the doctrine of life, Christ was a great Teacher of wisdom. See Him on "That great day of the feast, the feast of tabernacles." "Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly

shall flow rivers of living water." (John vii.) And such was the effect of that day's preaching upon all who heard Him, that consternation, inquiry, and reflection, seemed to thrill through every bosom, throughout Jerusalem, and all the region round about. "Lo, he speaketh boldly. Do the rulers know, indeed, that this is the very Christ?" As they thus communed together, mystery, unearthly mystery, crept through their inmost souls. "We know this man whence he is: but when Christ cometh, no man knoweth whence he is." And again we read, many of the people when they heard Him, said, "Of a truth this is *the* prophet. Others said, This is the Christ."

And the answer of the officers who were sent to take Him to the chief priests and Pharisees tells us, how profound and astounding was that wisdom, which they heard fall from His lips: "Never man spake like this man." It was more, it was vital; and this, the sharp retort of the Pharisees evidenced as they saw the hold it had taken upon the hearts and minds of the people, "Are ye also deceived? Have any of the rulers or of the Pharisees believed on him? But this people who knoweth not the law, are cursed." How strange the perversion of the lost,—believers cursed, because they know not the law! that Divine law which they have seen magnified, made honourable by their Head, under whose standard they have enlisted, and to whose standard they daily strive to attain. Oh, Pharisees, priests of the temple, blind guides, false teachers of the dead letter of the law, "Are ye also deceived?"

Nicodemus came forth as it were from behind the scene, again from behind the shade of night, and ventured a bold retort upon the profane urgers of the letter of their creed : "Doth our law judge any man, before it hear him, and know *what* he doeth?" It was enough, they were debtors to the whole law, ashamed, defeated, "Every man went unto his own house."

We are so accustomed to read and to hear the words of Christ, to listen to this doctrine of life, that their force, depth, and momentous importance are too much lost upon us. Could they be given to us for the first time, their pertinence would strike, their depth puzzle, their authority would command, their grandeur would overawe, and their divinity convince. But frequent use has made us miserably apathetic, and I do not know how the vitality of the Scriptures, of wisdom, is to be restored ; or rather, how the darkened understanding is to be brought into contact with it.

Upon the subject of Christ as teacher of wisdom, I need only add, that He taught that it is our highest wisdom to believe in Him, to receive Him. "Whosoever liveth and believeth on me shall never die;" never die to the covenant of life in himself, never die to God, to His promises, His favour ; never be separated from His providence, from His wisdom, from His power ; shall never be detached from His government and kingdom ; but all these shall lead on to life eternal.

"He that believeth shall be saved ; but he that believeth

not shall be damned"—shall come under condemnation. The unbeliever is under condemnation now ; he is detached from God, from His government, "the carnal mind is not subject to the law of God," and all is leading him on to everlasting condemnation. He that believeth not in the One glorious Mediation, in the medium of life between God and man, shall come under eternal condemnation. Was not Christ a great teacher of wisdom, in setting forth so clearly, so forcibly, and so unceasingly these great doctrines of life ?

As "The Prophet," Christ was a great teacher of wisdom. I know here I am on less-credited ground : some people seem to me to repudiate altogether the Bible as a revelation ; they receive the letter of it, they find in it all they want for the passing moment, and to the study of prophecy they have an utter repugnance. I do not blame them, they have not "the Spirit of prophecy," and they can no more enter into the study of it, than any one can teach faithfully and successfully the doctrine of Christ, who has not "the Spirit of Truth." Let such leave it alone, they will only make a jumble of it. I do believe the gifts of the Spirit are thus distinct, and to interpret prophecy, a person must be anointed of God with the Spirit of the Prophets. (Isa. vi. 6—8 ; Jer. i. 5 ; Ezek. i. 3 ; Dan. x. 8 ; ix. 16—18 ; 1 Cor. xii. 8—10 ; xiv. 32.) I would record here, the experience which taught me this truth, but there is in the world so much that is ridiculous, and spurious, that I forbear.*

* I have explained this since in the Preface of this work, as circumstances seem to demand that I should do so.

Let us learn to estimate more each other's gifts, and not to despise any, as they are all given of God for the edification of His Church. It is very remarkable that we find typical, prophetic characters thus anointed with the gifts of the Spirit, not more for the day of office they were to fill than for the future which they were to exhibit, by the God in them setting forth that future. (Judges xiii. 25 ; xiv. 6 ; vi. 12—14.)* David and Solomon, and many others, were endued with *many* gifts ; but in this Christ differed essentially from them all, He was anointed with *all* the gifts of the Spirit : "The Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord." (Isa. xi. 2.) "I have put my Spirit upon him." (xlii. 1.) "God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows." (Ps. xlv. 7.) "With my holy oil have I anointed him." (lxxxix. 20.) The Spirit of God was the Spirit of Christ, and thus the attributes of the one were the attributes of the other ; and hence the Omniscient attribute of prophecy. And I think we lose one of the most convincing, sublime phases of His ministry in not receiving the prophetic phase of it ; as I read it I recognise "The Prophet" of the world's history, I recognise in Him the One Eternal Spirit in all His omniscient

* Should these passages not be understood as here referred to, I can only ask the reader to forbear criticism till this part of my work shall be in print.

wisdom, redemptive grace, and glory, that which dwelt only in part in the prophets; as I read, I read the letter of a beautiful parable, the fact of a marvellous miracle, the record of an historic event, but I read in them all, an overreaching future which God only could reveal. (Luke xvi. 19; xxviii. 31; John iv. 35; xi.; Matt. xiv. 25; xxi. 19; xxiv. 21, 22, 29, 30.) And so throughout the whole of His ministry, it is prophetic, and that Spirit of prophecy in Him was too, "the Spirit of wisdom," even as God in Him was "wisdom." Read again that lofty inspiration, the eighth of Proverbs, it is marvellous upon the subject; the wise man after tracking the personality of wisdom through a past eternity, tracked it on as it were into our world, and said, "Wisdom hath builded her house, she hath hewn out her seven pillars there." (ix. 1.) It was Christ, "The Word," "Wisdom," "in his holy temple," as seen in the seven candlesticks; "Let all the earth keep silence before him," and listen to his voice, even to what "the Spirit of prophecy" shall say unto the Churches. St. Peter's words are remarkable; after speaking of the voice from heaven, heard at the baptism of Christ, and upon the mount of transfiguration, he added, "We have *also* a *more sure* word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well to take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, and the day star arise in your hearts." What did he mean by this last expression? I suppose he meant, study prophecy, go into it, into its depths, breadths, and heights, till "the day" of the world's history is compassed by you,

and the time of the second advent be ascertained ; because he is not here speaking of the conversion of a soul, by the light of the eternal Spirit dawning thereon, but of the sure word of prophecy given to us by inspiration. And I believe this is possible, just as the things of Christ were clearly foretold, so the things to the end of time are clearly foretold in that stupendous vision given to St. John ; and, comparing it with ancient prophecy, with our Saviour's ministry, taking it as a key to both : The day dawns, and the day star, Christ, in His millennial day-glory, does arise in our hearts. And then the Apostle continued, as though very earnest upon the subject, "Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man : but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." And then he went on to say, that some false prophets for merchandise should undertake to interpret prophecy, "Whose damnation slumbereth not." (2 Pet. i. ii.) Oh, let us look well to motive, to the roots and ground of all our reasoning, because the newspaper cannot interpret the mind of the Spirit in prophecy ; passing events, the signs of the times cannot interpret it ; the devil may change his policy, his tactics, a thousand times before he is subdued ; he may be submerged for a moment, for a dispensation, and then that old leviathan may rear again his monster head, and try to engulf the Church in the whirlpool of his subtilty and his power ; and God may suffer the outbreak for the manifestation of the

evil being, for the last exhibition of the evil nature in our world, that it may be universally execrated. If I glory in anything, it is in this: in the true, and right, and holy manifestation of God, as revealed to us in His Son, and in His Word; and in the exposure of the devil; and I thank God for that teaching, for that "washing by the Word," and for that experience which makes me hate him as I do. And in the last chapter of the same Epistle the Apostle goes on to explain, that in the prolonged conflict, this is the one purpose of God in all His creatures. The longsuffering of the Lord is salvation; and then He addresses the incoherent, and ungrounded teachers most tenderly, "*Beloved*, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day." And St. Paul says, "If the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle?" (1 Cor. xiv. 8.)

Then let us give heed to the sure word of prophecy, and not be discouraged by those who have more gifts, but not the gift of prophecy, and therefore can neither appreciate or enter into the subject; there is nothing more criminal than not to employ the gift we have. "If any man walk in the day he stumbleth not. But if any man walk in the night he stumbleth." Prophecy is one of the most glorious provisions of a gracious God, and I cannot understand any one being uninterested, but from the cause I have assigned: "The spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets. The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy." He is Himself a long vista, gloriously lighted up with Divine truths, with land-

marks, with seamarks, with beacons, and signs on every side, "I am the light of the world ;" let us read them as we pass on to glory, lest we misst he goal ; and the Church, in confusion and despair, be submerged by the devil "in a moment of time." "Art thou not from everlasting, O Lord my God, mine Holy One?" I would here ask again, do we now understand how "Christ Jesus, of God is made unto us wisdom?"

Thirdly, He is made unto us wisdom from having left a great Teacher in His name. "I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter" (this word would be more properly rendered teacher, or one who consoles by instruction), "that he may abide with you for ever; even the Spirit of truth." "The Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things." (John xiv. 16—26.) "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth." (xvi. 13.) The Spirit of truth is the third person in the Holy Trinity, and we can never receive the truth but by Him, "whom the world cannot receive." What a strange dismemberment from wisdom is the world, from truth, from life, from God, because the Spirit of truth is God; the world is indifferent, dead to Him, "because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him." There is even a greater estrangement still, a greater gulf still than blindness or ignorance between the world and God, "Them that hate me." There are those who are haters of the truth ; it is unpalatable, disagreeable, nauseous to them ; it is not in their way, and they turn from it ; sight might be restored,

knowledge received, but for this dislike, hatred. St. Paul gives a marvellous description of these, and winds it up by saying, they are "ever learning, and never able to come to a knowledge of the truth." (2 Tim. iii. 1, 3, 5, 7.) Yet the Spirit of truth is in the world, and that He is not received by it, is because the human heart is pre-occupied. It is a perilous thing, the soul's everlasting loss, to resist the Spirit of Truth. He is the revealer of redemption through Christ, of our everlasting inheritance through Him, "He shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you." "All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall show it unto you." (John xvi. 14, 15.) Oh, let us shake off the perilous slumber of the world, the sleep of death, and receive the Spirit of Truth, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him." And let us, too, more gratefully acknowledge the great and glorious truth, "Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom." "Wisdom strengtheneth the wise more than ten mighty men which are in the city." (Eccles. vii. 19.) "A man's wisdom maketh his face to shine, and the boldness of his face *shall be* changed." (Ib. viii. 1; 2 Cor. iii. 17, 18.) "This wisdom have I seen also under the sun, and it seemed great unto me: there was a little city, and few men within it; and there came a *great king* against it [the devil], and besieged it, and built great bulwarks against it: now there was found in it a poor wise man [Christ], and he by his wisdom delivered the city; yet no man remembered that same poor man. Then said I,

Wisdom is better than strength : nevertheless the poor man's wisdom is despised." (Eccles. ix. 13—16.) "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory." (John i. 14.) Do we now understand how Christ, the Inspirer, Author, and Giver of Revelation, is made unto us wisdom ? See other passages : James i. 18 ; Eph. v. 26 ; John xv. 3 ; xvii. 14—17.

"And righteousness." I shall here only glance at this doctrine, in tracing the tables of the law from Sinai to the Mount, where Christ preached His sublime and stupendous sermon upon the Decalogue in the early part of this work. I have fully gone into it ; and, as I have said before, I refer the reader to my volume of letters upon the fundamental doctrines of the Bible. But for connexion, I will, in a few words, present the doctrine in its absolute sense without entering upon the broad, deep matter of the subject.

Just as the letter of the law was laid up in the ark of the everlasting covenant, so that same Divine law was laid up in the Second Adam to be spiritualized by Him, and then to be fulfilled by Him in the most lofty sense of the spiritual standard reared. Read again and again that Sermon upon the Mount, scan the altitude of the precepts inculcated ; and then scan, too, the life of the Preacher, the perfect practice of all by Him ; how, "through the Eternal Spirit he offered himself without spot to God." How by the upholding power of God, His obedience was completed, even to the death of the Cross, see the spiritual standard reared on Calvary, "Father, forgive them." Oh, there was heaven in

that standard, God in that prayer ; see Him wing His way to the throne of judgment, and plant that ensign there,

"HOLINESS TO THE LORD." (Exod. xxviii. 36.)

And then see, again, vitality from our great High Priest, His very nature, as it were, Deity descend,

"THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS."

And then see the sinner clothed in that robe of holiness, light, life, and glory, in a nature that can never become extinct. Not in the cold, apathetic nature of the dead, but in one which will work by love, and purify the mind : " Love is the fulfilling of the law." It was the law of love in the bosom of Christ which planted the standard of a perfect obedience upon Calvary before the throne ; and the law of love in our bosoms must evidence the truth that we have received from Him the justifying robe of His meritorious and all-prevailing obedience. " Therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith : as it is written, The just shall live by faith." (Rom. i. 17.) " They being ignorant of *God's righteousness*, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the *righteousness of God*. For Christ is the end of the law to every one that believeth. With the heart man believeth unto righteousness." (x. 3, 4—10.) " Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness. To him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness. Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, saying, Blessed are they

whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord *will not* impute sin." (iv. 3, 7, 8.) That is, "Blessed," because he cannot come under the curse, under condemnation; and why? Because he believes in Christ, in the justifying righteousness of God through Him, "The just shall live by his faith" (Hab. ii. 4); that is, live the life of God, of the pardoned, the redeemed, and the glorified, and this even here (2 Cor. iii. 18); and thus it was that the Apostle referred so emphatically and repeatedly to that life of faith so plainly set forth by the ancient prophet. (Rom. i. 17; Gal. iii. 11; Heb. x. 38.)

A justifying righteousness is a living, operating, uniting principle: "Ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, to Him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God." The whole of the seventh and eighth chapters of Romans are grand upon the subject. The apostle, as it were startled by his own absolute teaching, inquired pertinently, "What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid:" and the justified in Christ add their amen to his holy zeal for the letter of the law. "The law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good." (vii. 12.) "Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, That the man which doeth those things shall live in them." (x. 5.) And Christ answered the lawyer who came to him, "This do, and thou shalt live." (Luke x. 27, 28.) Our obedience to the law is justifying, inasmuch as any obedience of ours is by the Spirit of God. The restoration of the Spirit to the heart was the

purchase of the work of Christ, and therefore our obedience is meritorious as the result of His merit: "that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter." "The law is spiritual."

Grace and faith, and the gift of righteousness, do not abrogate the law: "God forbid; yea, we establish the law." Our glory is in keeping the law, even the spirit of it, in its most commanding, imposing, and exalted requisition; but this, on the other hand, does not make void justifying grace: "Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died." (Rom. viii. 33.) "Now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference: for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." (Rom. ii. 21—24.) "They which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ." "Therefore, as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous." (Ib. v. 17—19.) "If the ministration of condemnation be glory, much more doth the ministration of righteousness exceed in glory." (2 Cor. iii. 7—9.) I might

go on extracting passages in proof of this doctrine, but all doctrine seems embodied in Christ's own authoritative command : " If ye believe in God, believe also in me." " If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of him." (1 John ii. 29.) Do we now understand the Apostle, " Of God are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us righteousness ? "

" And sanctification." How was Christ made unto us sanctification ? His doctrine, " the mystery of godliness," of revelation, are concrete, and yet perfect in their abstractness. Christ is the root of doctrine, incarnate in His Word ; and yet every doctrine in that Word is an abstract, distinct. " The Word " is at once abstract and concrete ; and yet really in the Gospel of Christ, there are no abstractions : " Christ Jesus, who *of God* is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption." In an abstract sense, He could not have been made these to the world through all generations ; but as Himself alone the *Author of Revelation* He is all these to every being of the human family throughout the world's history. Some people separate the work of the Spirit from the work of Christ, whereas it was His work which restored the Spirit to our world, to the heart of man ; and then " holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." And herein He is made unto us sanctification. " The Spirit of Truth " is the power of His Word. We cannot resist the power of truth ; we may try to do so, we may shut our eyes to it, try to close our hearts against it ; but it rankles, it inflames, it

probes, it is sharper than any two-edged sword,—it wounds till it has convinced of sin; and then it heals: it is our sanctification. “I have been afflicted that I might learn thy statutes.” “Let my heart be *sound* in thy statutes.” “My lips shall utter praise, when thou hast taught me thy statutes.” (Psalm cxix.) I think if there is one phase of David’s life more imposing than another, it is that in which we see him turn to the Sacred writings he had neglected, and gather from them the rule of his future life: “It is good for me that I have been afflicted; that I might learn thy statutes. Thou in faithfulness hast afflicted me.” In affliction he turned to the letter of the law, and it sanctified him.

“The Spirit of Truth,” and the Spirit in ourselves, when we are “born of God,” are one Spirit. There is an approximation of spirit, a coming into joint contact; and Christ is the author and giver of both. When the covenant of a Messiah was fulfilled, it waxed old, and vanished away, and the Divine Person of that covenant confirmed the New Covenant made by God to the prophets; and the third person in the Holy Trinity was the blessing of that New Covenant as the second person in the Holy Trinity had been of the first; and hence the “Spirit of Truth,” and the vital power to receive the “Spirit of Truth:” “Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.” And thus it is that we see the “Head of the Church,” “the King of Saints” in heaven, “made, not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life.” “The law made nothing perfect, but the

bringing in of a better hope did, by the which we draw nigh unto God." (Heb. vii. 16—19.) By life, from "the Author of Life," we draw nigh to God in His Word, and it sanctifies us. Thus I do not believe that the thief upon the cross was saved by Omnipotent power, without in any way coming in contact with the Omnipotent Word. The incorruptible seed which liveth, might, at some time, have fallen into his heart,—he might, somewhere in his midnight plunders, have heard Him preach, who was ever seeking to save the lost: "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God;" and under the condemnation of the law and of death, he found that Word to be ordained to life. There was not, then, a word of teaching from the Great Teacher at his side: "One of the malefactors which were hanged railed on him, saying, *If thou be Christ, save thyself and us.* But the other answering rebuked him, saying, *Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation?* And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss. And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom." We see in this man's knowledge and confession all that was necessary to receive eternal life; he felt himself to be a sinner, that he was suffering justly, and that Jesus was his God, his Lord, and Saviour, and able to save him. There were no *ifs* in his creed; he had learned the truth somewhere; and as death stole over his mortal frame, it was found to be living truth. The Apostle's epitaph might, too, have been the malefactor's: "Without the law sin was dead. For

was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and *I died.*"

Faith in Christ is not the cold abstract thing that those who have it not condemn it to be; it is a belief in "the life of God" brought home to us in that which is a vital reality. And it is by that power we overcome everything that exalteth itself against Him, and bring into captivity every thought in obedience to Christ. The gift of the Spirit is sovereign and absolute, independent of men; and the gift of the Spirit is wrought in the study of the Word. "I have given them my word. Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth." (John xvii. 14—17.) "Ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you." (John xv. 3.) "Christ redeemed the Church, and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word." (Eph. v. 26.) "Of his own will begat he us by the word of truth." And thus it was the apostle said, after quoting the words of the prophet, "Lo, I come to do thy will, O God." "By the which *will* we are sanctified." (Heb. x. 7—10.) Oh, I will not ask again, do we understand what St. Paul meant; but let his words be gratefully engraven upon our hearts, "Of God are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption." If, in this work, I have not taught the doctrine of the atonement and of redemption fully, I will now here teach it absolutely, still referring you to my letter on the subject for the argument and the evidence.

"And *redemption*." "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." "Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost." "Behold the Lamb of God!" (John i. 29, 33—36.) What a glorious announcement to break upon the world! What radiant glory from the eternal throne! The Being who was to redeem our earth then stood upon her heaving, troubled bosom; the Being who was to give life to our world then stood upon its riven base. "Behold." Behold the God-man, with redemption in his design, with life in his gift! Behold! Behold "the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace." Behold, "Emmanuel, God with us." Behold "the Prince of Life"! Oh, stupendous announcement! glorious advent! The Word of God is too hackneyed in our world, or such language would strike us dumb before an Incarnate God; before an Incarnate God in His Word; before an Incarnate God in ourselves! Oh, who can restore it to its sacredness? to its sacred rest in our hearts? Who can restore the morbid, apathetic, careless, vapid mind to an appreciation of its important truths, to a belief in its vitality? Who can give tone to the sickly appetite, to enjoy it in its freshness and original force?

Notice the two fundamental doctrines taught by John. First, the Being who was to baptize with the Holy Ghost, or the Giver of Life; and secondly, the Lamb of God who was to take away the sin of the world. That Anointed One was, is, and ever will be, the Giver of life to those who will receive

it. He Himself taught this absolutely, and therefore no vain equivocations of the dead will suffice with Him. "Ye will not come to me that ye might have life." "The bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world." "The words that I speak unto you are life." "I am the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live."

The God-man was, too, the expiatory sacrifice for the sin of the world. "Lamb of God" must signify, a sacrifice of God. "Of God are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us redemption." If we were to extract from the Old Testament a little volume upon the typical system of sacrifice, it would perhaps startle many a trifler, many indifferent ones to the things of God. I almost read with awe that gigantic system, and see involved in it a Sacrifice of nobler birth, a living Sacrifice, that could suffer death, but could not die. At the dedication of the Temple, which was a type of the Christian Church, we read, Solomon offered a sacrifice of peace offerings unto the Lord, two and twenty thousand oxen, and an hundred and twenty thousand sheep. (1 Kings viii. 63.) Christian, do you know that your peace-offering cost more than that? "Ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot." (1 Pet. i. 18, 19.) "Behold the Lamb of God!" When Solomon was made king, the people sacrificed "a thousand bullocks, a thousand rams, and a thousand lambs, with drink offerings and

sacrifices in abundance for all Israel." (1 Chron. xxix. 21.) Christian, do you know that the restoration and reign of "the King of Righteousness and King of Peace," in your heart cost more than that? "We are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ."

When David sinned he offered unto the Lord burnt offerings, and sin offerings, but the sin offering of the sinner cost more than types. "It is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sin." "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world."

The foundation of the Jewish Church was consecrated by blood (Exod. xxiv. 6—10), and her Liturgy was blood; the priestly office was one of blood, the recourse of the transgressor was blood. The Antediluvian and the Patriarchal Churches were, too, consecrated by blood; and in the New Testament the great Antitype stands before us, as it were, in his purpose of blood, in all the majesty of his spiritual commission, in all the grandeur of the God, "Behold the Lamb of God." "Without shedding of blood there is no remission." The water from His riven side symbolized the living water of the living Word, of which He was the Author; and the blood symbolized the life, which, too, flowed from Him. "The life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar, to make an atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul." (Lev. xvii. 11.) Then Justice sheathed her sword, and called for blood no more.

Then, who was the great substitutionary Sacrifice for sin ? God in man. The God and the Second Adam were united, and yet as distinct as two natures can exist. I will not cloud this subject, as some do, by exalting the Son above the Father, nor by obscuring the human nature by the Godhead ; they stand in glorious distinction, and still in beautiful agreement. "My Father is greater than I." "I and my Father are one." (John xiv. 28 ; x. 30.)

The eternity of the Sonship is a subject for deep inquiry. The human nature was begotten into the world, but the spiritual nature of Christ was that coeval with the Father, or begotten in a past eternity. One, because of the Father. I believe the spiritual nature of Christ was the Father, distinct only in the person of the Second Adam, in the Being, or link, ordained to annex the human family to "the Father of spirits." When Christ prayed to His Father, it was this distinct nature which prayed ; when He intercedes now, it is the God which prevails ; and when we pray for ourselves, it is His Spirit in us which prevails ; for if we have not His Spirit, we do not pray, nor can we be heard.

I will fairly show you the passages which favour the doctrine of the eternity of the Sonship, and then the evidence which proves that the eternity of the Son was of the Godhead. Colossians i., from the fourteenth to the nineteenth verse, is, I think, the principal of these. The Apostle says, "By him were all things created that are in heaven and that are in earth, visible and invisible : all things were created

by him, and for him : and he is before all things, and by him all things consist." But if this be read carefully from the twelfth verse, it will be seen in a moment that the Apostle is speaking of the complex nature of Christ, for he begins, "Giving thanks unto the Father;" and then, after speaking of the Son as Creator, he finishes by again combining the two natures, by speaking of the duplex One: "It pleased the Father"—or it might be rendered, "It pleased God that in Him should all fulness dwell." Just as the Alpha and the Omega—one God—stretches over the age of the world in the Apocalyptic vision, so here, the God in the Son governs the Apostle's whole assertion.

When he says, "the first born of every creature," he is speaking of the Son, the first born in the prescient mind, the first in the fiat of creation—Let it be done—"The Word was with God, and the Word was God;" for he says again, "the first born from the dead." Christ was neither of these, but in the omniscient mind He was both. "The lamb slain from the foundation of the world." This teaching of the Spirit, that all time is alike present to God, opens and explains to us many other parts of Scripture. (Heb. i. 2; Rom. viii. 29.)

The seventeenth and fifth of John is another passage that a careless reader would think justifies the belief of the eternity of the Son: "Now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was." This is the voice of the distinct human nature

praying for that Oneness of Spirit and of Being which once existed.

"Glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee." The Father did glorify the Son by supporting Himself the pillar of Redemption; and the Son glorified the Father by finishing the work He gave Him to do.

Then, who was "*the Lamb of God?*" God and man. Of John it was prophesied, that he should "prepare the way of the Lord, make a highway for *our God*." (Isa. xl. 3.) "He shall go before the *Lord God* of Israel." (Luke i. 16, 17.) These were absolute prophecies of the advent of *God* in Christ. Those concerning the Son were alike absolute, yet distinct, "Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee." (Ps. ii. 7.) "Unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given." It is very remarkable that concerning the first Adam there is used the same form of expression with regard to his relation to God as that used of Christ, "which was the son of God." (Luke iii. 38.) Or, if all the sons of this chapter were left out altogether, "the son," which they well may be, "of Abraham, of David, of God," we should get the spiritual genealogy instead of the human history, or both, which I think is what is intended, "of God." What a line of ancestry! And Christ begotten, not made, God essentially begotten into our world! Oh, "chosen generation," do you know your spiritual privilege, power? "Of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ." (Matt. i. 16.)

St. Paul's words concerning the duplex nature of Christ are remarkable: "The invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead." (Rom. i. 20.)

"God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit." (1 Tim. iii. 16.) "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself." (2 Cor. v. 19.) "In Christ dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." (Col. ii. 9.) "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work." (John v. 17.) "He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father. The Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works." (Ib. xiv. 10.)

Then, who was "the Lamb of God?" God 'in the tabernacle of the flesh, in the temple of his body; a duplex, Divine and human, Being, sent to redeem soul and body; in His great work He did blot out, expiate the sin of the world, and redeem all material creation. Original sin, all actual sin was blotted out, that is legally and virtually atoned for; man has now no more to do with the subject of his sinful nature than though he were a perfect being. Let me not herein be mistaken, I am speaking now of his state, by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ; by nature he has hell within him, a hell which, if not extirpated by the Spirit of God, brought home to him by Christ, it will lead him on to hell consummated in the devil; for the beast, and Satan, in the nineteenth and twentieth, and in the twentieth and twenty-second of the Revelation, signify the whole body of the

lost, as the Church in the tabernacle, and in the temple of the Lord God Almighty, signify the whole body of the saved. (Rev. xxi. 3 ; xxii.) Yes, I say, man has "the old man," "the old serpent," hell within him in some form, till the Spirit of Christ enters in to root out original evil, and so to enthrone Himself, till He unite him eternally with Christ. "Our God is a consuming fire" for sin. (Deut. iv. 24 ; Heb. xii. 29.) His nature is purifying, sanctifying, and it will refine till all fallen nature be restored. Upon the altar of that nature the sin of the world was legally consumed : "God hath made him sin for us." (2 Cor. v. 21.) Sin now only remains to be felt, to be exposed, that the sinner may flee to the city of refuge, Christ, and be eternally saved : "In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace. Wherein he hath abounded toward us. Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself : that in the dispensation of the fulness of time he might gather together in one, all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth ; even in him : in whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the good counsel of his will." (Eph. i. 7 ; x. 11.) "Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and *purify* unto himself a peculiar people." (Titus ii. 14.) Hell will not only be an exhibition of the real nature of sin, and of the nature of Satan,

but it will be also a lasting monument of the more aggravated guilt of unbelief. We see Christ throughout Revelation, upon the grand arena of universal space, a glorious substitution for man, an expiatory Sacrifice for sin, a glorious Mediator, a source of life; and he that receiveth Him not, and believeth not, must remain under condemnation for sin.

“Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us.” (Gal. iii. 13.) The terribleness of that curse can never be conceived of by man, it was the full penalty of transgression, hell poured upon the atoning victim; the Holy One cast into hell. “The sorrows of death compassed me, and the pains of hell gat hold upon me.” “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” To be cut off from God is hell, and as we see humanity as it were aghast before the fiery ordeal, the Godhead, the pillar of Redemption, again appears through the aperture of the rending veil, to sustain the dying victim in His atoning work, “Who in the days of the flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared.” “Save him from death,” means here, save Him from the second death, from condemnation, from the eternal punishment of the sin which He had undertaken to expiate; and God the Eternal Spirit did uphold Him in His course, justify Him in His direst extremity. “Father, forgive them.” Was not this such obedience to the Divine law as that He should live in it? Was it not moral victory? Oh, was it not the

triumph of the God, the defeat of all the hosts of hell? "He learned obedience by the things which He suffered; and, being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that *obey* him." (Heb. v. 7—9.) His life had been pure, humble, perfect: "Which of you convinceth me of sin?" But that moral dignity of the cross is surpassingly sublime. Satan was then incarnate in His enemies; legions of evil spirits swelled, and rolled, and boiled like troubled seas; they spit upon Him, mocked Him, gave Him vinegar and gall to drink, pierced Him, crowned Him with thorns; still the prevailing incense rose, the credentials of our peace rose, "Father, forgive them." This was Godlike, it was God; and that exalted standard of His kingdom, of His nature, is the glory which falls upon the believer, "that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." "He hath made him to be sin for us who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."

Here is the interpretation, the beautiful signification of the Scapegoat; the goat of sin offering typified the human sacrifice, Christ; the Scapegoat, the Eternal Godhead, that Being of Omnipotent resource, life, and power, whom no circumstance can overpower, whom no depth of difficulty can startle, no exigency dismay, or in any way trouble his inherent repose. He merged from that billow of justice and of hell, which shook the manhood to its base, bearing with Him all the iniquity of the human family into a land not inhabited (Levit. xvi. 8—22),

that is, into eternal oblivion. "Their sins and iniquities will I remember no more." Hebrews xiii. 20, is one of the most remarkable passages in the Bible: we there read, that the God who had quitted the rending tabernacle of the flesh, returned to revivify it again through the efficacy of the blood of the victim. "The God of Peace" not only saved from death, but restored to the Holy One unforfeited life. "Christ was raised up from the dead by the *glory* of the Father" (Rom. vi. 4); that is, by the essential holiness of the Father. Oh, yes, as I have said, there was sublime dignity, moral perfection in that prayer from hell, sent up for His enemies, "Father, forgive them." There was moral dignity in that *obedience* "unto death; even the death of the cross." These were the *glory* of the Father; and they are both our justification and redemption. And so I shall show you later, the resurrection from the dead is brought under this "law of the Spirit of life, in Christ Jesus." The Apostle calls it in another place, "the redemption of our body." "But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you." (Rom. viii. 2; xi. 23.)

And who will dare to limit that law of immortal life, that law of *moral* life, that rose calm and majestic above the billows of an ignominious death, above the surges of hell? "Father, forgive them," may yet prevail for "the spirits in prison." (1 Pet. iii. 19.) I think the water of the Word,

the life of the blood from the riven side may yet roll there, revivify the dead there; He "was heard in that he feared;" and may not those prayers, supplications, with strong crying and tears, yet be heard to an extent we know not of? "Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God; being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit: by which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison." Yes, the great moral and spiritual Conqueror over death and hell has the keys of Hades, and that pit which was bottomless, ever leading on to further ruin and more awful death, was spanned by Him; its depth probed, fathomed, measured, and arrested by Him, and He can turn its engulfing current when He will. David could say, "Thou hast delivered my soul from the lowest hell." (Ps. lxxxvi. 13.) And I say it reverently, if I were consigned to a hell beyond this world, I would pray that the door of heaven, Christ, might not be closed so that I might not hope in God. "Jesus, when he had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost."

I think I have now shown you that the work of God in Christ brought home to us a vital wisdom. "They shall be all taught *of* God." A vital righteousness. "By the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification *of* life." (Rom. v. 17, 18.) A living, regenerating, sanctifying power. "Our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost." (1 Thess. i. 5.) A living, redemptive power. "The God of peace

brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus." "I am the resurrection and the life." "Thou hast redeemed us to God by thy blood." (Rev. v. 9.)

There is now no radical, damning sin but unbelief; actual sin grows out of that, and this is why we are left in the dark about original sin. We have nothing to do with it; and hence the last emphatic words of the Redeemer: "He that believeth and is baptized"—baptized with the Holy Ghost—"shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned."

This is but a very unworthy examination of our title-deeds to heaven; but perhaps sufficiently deep to understand the Apostle's comprehensive words, "Of God are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: that, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord." (1 Cor. i. 30.)

CHAPTER XII.

CHRIST'S MINISTRY.—MARY MAGDALENE.

I SHALL notice but one more phase of our Saviour's life and ministry, but it is one which will set forth to us their true character, perhaps more than any other point from which we may view them ; it is the prominent place He Himself gave to Mary Magdalene in the historic record. We may ask here, why did He do this ? and then look at the record as it is left to us. Why did He do this ? He had said in witness of Himself, "The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them." (Matt. xi. 5.) "He hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor ; he hath sent me to *heal the brokenhearted*, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised." (Luke iv. 18.) And was not this a noble witness of Himself, of One whose sole commission was to gather souls from the devil to God ? And then, as a grand, practical exemplification of that commission, He left prominently upon the scene of His labours this trophy of

redeeming grace. I do not think He set her there so much a monument of saving power, as to characterize to His disciples, and to all future ministers of the Gospel, the true nature of their work. It was simply to save souls, to give supremacy to the kingdom of God in the world, so that it might be all-conquering and all-prevailing, till the kingdom of the prince of this world should be subdued, till the glory of it faded in the glory which excelleth.

“My kingdom is not of this world : if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews : but now is my kingdom not from hence.” (John xviii. 36.) There is a very extended meaning in this verse, and one which very deeply concerns the Church in all ages. Is it not the one feature of her life to make the kingdom of Christ of this world ? to humanize what is Divine ? to be self-seeking, self-glorifying ? to pervert God's grace to glorify herself upon the earth, instead of only exalting the kingdom of God in the hearts of men ? Would Christ's servants now be willing to fight for Him, if there were no earthly remuneration whatever ? Will they fight for Him, should His kingdom take again the humble form in which He exhibited it to the world ? Will she fight for Him when she is derobed again of earthly glory as He once derobed her ? Will she be faithful to Him when she has no representative power but His invisible presence, no strength to uphold her but His, no kingdom to protect, no throne to defend her but His ? Oh, if she knew that,

then would be her opportunity to do exploits ; that when she is weak then she is strong, that "the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God stronger than men." Oh, had she known this when her great Example derobed her of human glory, set her without the precincts of the doomed city, bade her not look back, but to flee for her life to the eternal city ! Had she followed the example of her Head in humility, in single and holy purpose, our earth now would have been restored, one with heaven. She has not done so : she has denied Him thrice, and He is now at the door to try by fire whether His kingdom be in the ascendant in the hearts of His people or not. "The trial of your faith being much more precious than of gold that perisheth." If we were to read carefully the four Gospels, we should see that one of the most grand purposes in the ministry of Christ was to induce faith, to strengthen or to develop faith, and to exhibit faith. Church of the living God ! this is what He would now do to you : strengthen and exhibit your faith ; be strong, be stedfast, be noble, be magnanimous, be vital, and when He has exhibited your faith He will reward it. Let us turn again to the trophy of His choosing, and let it act both as an incentive to faith in Him, and an incentive to faith in herself as His instrument. Trophy, among the ancients, signified a pile of arms taken from the vanquished enemy. And is not every soul brought from Satan's kingdom into the kingdom of God a pile of arms—territory won, conquest leading on to conquest, vic-

tory to victory? *Spiritual genealogy*? Let us fight against the enemy; but, oh, let us not fight against ourselves, against any in whom the Spirit of Christ dwells. Let us defend the kingdom to the last in whomsoever it may be found for this cause He left this record of it upon the table of sacred writings; this was why He gave the history of the prominence He did.

As I have said before, there is evidently a veil, distinctly intended, cast around the Marys of the New Testament veil so delicately woven that the pure may read, and so that the profane may not approach. After years of thought upon the subject, I do believe Mary the sister of Martha and Lazarus to be the same woman as is spoken of in St. Luke as a sinner. Commentators, indeed the whole of the Christian Church, seem to have jumped to a conclusion upon the subject of these Marys; and it has been held down in all ages as received opinion without the slightest foundation in the Divine Record. Let us look carefully at all the records of the sacred historians.

Lazarus, Mary, and Martha were of Bethany, and this is immediately added, "It was that Mary which anointed the Lord with ointment, and *wiped his feet with her hair*, and her brother Lazarus was sick." (John xi. 1, 2.) The Bible is very definite in its relations, and we are to adhere to the Divine definitions, and not to jump to our own conclusions. There is not another mention of any one who wiped the Lord's feet with her hair, save the woman called by Si-

'a sinner" (Luke vii. 38); save the same Mary, the sister of Lazarus, after his resurrection, where she performed again precisely the same act as that recorded by St. Luke (vii. 38), and which is recorded by St. John. (xii. 3.)

Now let us look at the history and the family of this same Mary. She was of Bethany; that was her native town; and therefore, I think, we have every reason to believe she was of the family of Simon the leper, mentioned in the twenty-sixth chapter of Matthew. St. Mark says, "Being in Bethany, in the house of Simon the leper, as he sat at meat, there came a woman having an alabaster box of ointment very precious, and she poured it on his head." (xiv. 3.) Now this could not have been the occasion referred to by St. John (xi. 2.); here the ointment was poured upon the head, whereas he says, "anointed the Lord with ointment, and wiped his feet with her hair." This occasion we find recorded by Luke vii. 38); she "began to wash his feet with tears, and did wipe them with the hairs of her head, and kissed his feet, and anointed them with ointment." This was in the house of Simon the Pharisee; and in John (xii. 3.) we find again, Mary, the sister of Lazarus, repeating the act, precisely as related by St. Luke: she "anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped his feet with her hair." This, too, occurred at Bethany, and, without doubt, in the house of Simon the leper. Then I am sure, for the solution of the question of these Marys, we must look somewhere beyond the usually received interpretation. I have said the woman with this ointment is one and the

same Mary. I know all commentators differ, and that my opinion will be utterly and at once rejected ; but that will not in the least alter it. I will glance first at the generally-received opinion of the family at Bethany, and then endeavour to set forth what I find to be in the Sacred Record.

Bethany was a town at the foot of Mount Olivet, and some ideal writers have pictured there an ancient castle, or family mansion, where dwelt this holy family in affluence and refinement ; that the place was surrounded by great natural beauties, that life glided there in calm, unruffled joy ; holiness in unmolested sway, and peace uninterrupted by alloy. And these visionary enthusiasts picture, too, the Redeemer of the world retiring thither to recruit Himself after His toilsome work was done, to refresh Himself in ease and in holy communion with these saints when His ministerial labour could be laid aside. We admire very much poetical genius, flights of imagination,—high, holy, and lofty conception. But certainly there was no poetry, no halcyon moments, no sylvan retreats in our Redeemer's life. If He soared away to that which was sublime, it was in moral triumphs, in spiritual victories ; and He did this, first, by uprooting sin, and then by raising to His Divine standard the freed captive from its thrall. His holy footsteps were never found in the common walks of life ; and if this sylvan retreat at Bethany were real, it was an exception from His whole life. "The Son of man is come to save that which was lost." "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of man hath

where to lay his head." And this leads me on to my biblical sketch of the little family at Bethany.

I think the head of this family at Bethany was Simon, not then leper, but the cleansed leper ; perhaps the same we find coming to Jesus, worshiping, and saying, " Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean." (Matt. viii. 2.) This miracle of healing, as recorded by St. Mark, favours this proposition ; for the chapter where it is related is luminous with Christ's miracles, of healing diseases, and casting out evils. Simon was a very venerable name in Israel. I think we read of no less than eleven persons of that name ; some in the family of our Lord, and some amongst His disciples, and therefore He might have had a particular regard both for Simon the leper, and for Simon the Pharisee, whom He would instruct by the incident of the woman in his house.

I think Lazarus was a son of Simon the leper, perhaps himself a leper, perhaps the very person referred to by Christ in His relation of the Rich Man, and Lazarus, " full of sores." The rich man signified the priesthood, and His command to the healed leper was, " show thyself to the priest." A leper in Israel was cut off from the people, as one dead. Our Lord first raised these dead from the death of leprosy,—the type of sin ; and then He may have raised this same Lazarus from the dead,—a type of the fulness of resurrection life in Himself. And then the Mary of that family, who was she ? I believe the same as she who is so emphatically called by Simon the Pharisee, " a sinner." (Luke vii. 39.) Perhaps a disowned

relative of his ; perhaps the proud Pharisee was annoyed at her appearing in his whited sepulchre ; and, as I have said before, it is evident the Redeemer had a peculiar design of mercy towards him. I say it is possible, and more than probable, that this Mary, the sister of Martha, was Mary Magdalene. We read in the eighth chapter of St. Luke, "Certain women, which had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities, Mary *called* Magdalene, out of whom went seven devils." In the first chapter of St. Mark, where we have already seen a leper healed, which we have supposed might have been Simon, we read, "Christ cast out many devils ; and suffered them not to speak, because they knew him." And again we hear Him saying, "Let us go into the next town, that I may preach there also : for therefore came I forth." And is it not possible that this Mary was one of those there who were "possessed with devils," and out of whom they had been cast ? But why was she called Mary Magdalene ? For the Sacred Record particularizes this,— "Mary, called Magdalene." This does not signify that she was of Magdala,—that was simply a fortress near Tiberias and Gadara,—the word meaning tower, or greatness. Perhaps it was a Roman citadel, built by Herod Agrippa, as was Tiberias, in honour of the Emperor Tiberias.

The word Magdalene means tower, or grand, elevated, magnificent. Who gave her that name we do not know ; but we hear Christ saying to the chosen vessel of His purpose, "Thou shalt be called Cephas ;" and, as in Israel every name

was most significant, it is possible as our Saviour passed through the coasts of Magdala (Matt. xv. 39), and beheld the noble fort, with its significant name, the words of David came to His remembrance: "Thou hast been for me a strong tower from the enemy" (Ps. lxi. 3); "The name of the Lord is a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it and is safe." (Prov. xviii. 10.) And perhaps, as He beheld that fallen spirit rise from the dust, take refuge in her high tower of strength, and soar in elevation and majesty to heaven, He named her Magdalene,—elevated, magnificent. As we trace later her devotion, her faithful adherence to her Lord and Saviour, her humble position at His feet, we shall see how truly, and how divinely He estimated and discriminated the trophy won.

As we see His public acknowledgment of her acts and of her devotion: "Whosoever this gospel shall be preached in the whole world, there shall also this, that this woman hath done, be told for a memorial of her." "One thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her." I say, as we see this Divine public acknowledgment, one would have supposed it was compassion towards a being who had been exposed, betrayed, but not corrupted; towards the child of a parent who was dear to Him as the apple of His eye; of ancestors who, from age to age had served in His sacred cause; Simon might have been of such, but we have seen the sad, satanic thrall in which they had been held. And yet this is the regenerated house

the Redeemer set before the world,—the trophy of His gospel and His grace.

Martha, too, was there, a type of a converted Pharisee, who still could not, all at once, put off the robe of works she had, perhaps, been used to wear. It is very remarkable that after Christ had sent out His seventy disciples to work miracles and to preach, and told them wherever they went to eat such things as were set before them,—and had illustrated their missions by teaching the lawyer who was his neighbour,—He caused to be written for the further teaching and comfort of them all, the manner in which “Martha received him into her house. Mary also sat at Jesus’ feet, and heard his word.” (Luke x.)

And this leads me back again to the little regenerated home at Bethany. The word means, the house of praise, or of affliction, or the house of the grace of the Lord. The leper cleansed, the Priest had pronounced the plague healed, the house clean. The dead had there been raised to life, the loosed spirit a living monument of resurrection power. There the unclean were made whole of whatsoever disease they had. There the holy family made their Lord a supper. There Martha served, Lazarus sat at the table with Him, and Mary still worshipped at His feet. (John xii. 1—3.) Yes, there I think Jesus did retire to recruit a mind worn in the toil of His ministry on earth; He there beheld restitution at His feet; He there felt that He had the keys of hell and of death; He there found that there was a bottom to that pit

which had been bottomless ; that ruin was stopped, the leprous wound probed, stanchèd, and that the mighty basework of that pit was Himself. Halcyon moments might then be there, a sylvan shelter it might be. It was a home of humble and of holy adoration then ; worship in spirit and in truth. The high, holy, and exalted nature of the Lord was felt, no descent of heaven to earth, but earth upraised to heaven. Oh, hallowed spot ! house of the grace of the Lord ! " Cleanse us, O God, and we shall be clean ; wash us, and we shall be whiter than snow."

" Jesus went out of the city into Bethany, and he lodged there." (Matt. xxi. 17.) How often He resorted there we do not know ; but we should do well so to cast out the evil of our hearts as that He may lodge there. His disciples said unto Him, " Where dwellest thou ? He saith unto them, Come and see." Was it at Bethany ? Where was the consecrated spot that might only be disclosed by " Come and see," where the disciples might abide with Him one day, but of which the sacred historian closed the door, as an abode too sacred to be disclosed to a profane world. " Come and see." We may come to Bethany ; but in His life there were many other spots as regenerated, as sanctified, and as holy as Bethany. And now, does He not often say to us, " Come and see ;" and do we not there find hearts where He dwells ? where there is written over the portal, " The Lord is there," the spot is sacred, the place is holy ; a veil separates it from the world ;—the profane may not, cannot enter ; they cannot

even recognise the Lord there, and still He is ever saying to them, "Come and see." O blessed Redeemer, forgive our sins. Give us more of thy Spirit; make us more humble, more holy, more like thee, that when the inquiry of a profane world is made, "Where dwellest thou?" and thou answerest "Come and see," thou mayest there be seen.

But to return again to the narrative of Mary, and I must here again urge my hypothesis, that Mary the sister of Martha was Mary Magdalene. "*It was that Mary* which anointed the Lord with ointment, and *wiped his feet with her hair*, whose brother Lazarus was sick." This Mary I find in Luke vii. and xxxviii., and nowhere else in the Sacred Record, save, after the resurrection of her brother (John xii. 3), where we find her performing the same acts in the same manner. I do not know that we have any right to depart from what is positively asserted in Scripture, to create a sublime theory of our own imagination, which cannot be proved to have existed in fact.

Then let us inquire first, what was the meaning of Mary anointing our Lord with ointment? "Being *in Bethany*, in the house of Simon the leper, as he sat at meat, there came a woman having an alabaster box of ointment of spikenard very precious; and she brake the box, and poured it on his head." (Mark xiv. 3; Matt. xxvi. 7.) As I have said, there is a connecting link between the Mary of John xi. 2, and the Mary of Luke vii. 38; and so I think this house of Simon the leper at Bethany tells us that the woman who anointed

her Lord there was the same. Our Saviour saying so emphatically to Simon, "My *head* with oil thou didst not anoint" (Luke vii. 46), proves to me that He referred to her having done so in the house of Simon the leper. (Matt. xxvi. 6, 7.) These anointings were all performed by one and the same person. The idea of anointing was a vital one, a Divine inspiration, and I think when we have seen its meaning, we shall confess the act to have originated in one mind. It is true, there is very particularly connected "Mary Magdalene and the other Mary" (Matt. xxviii. 1 ; xxvii. 61), but this was "Mary the mother of James and Joses," and not Mary the sister of Lazarus. (xxvii. 56 ; Mark xv. 47 ; xvi. 1.) Therefore, I think that this woman, at all times so intent to anoint her Lord, was the one and the same Mary, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the sister of Lazarus ; and we seem to find the explication of the determined action of her zealous spirit in the words of her Redeemer, "Thy faith hath saved thee." (Luke vii. 50.)

What did she believe by that act of anointing ? She believed that "the Son of man" was the Messiah, the Being who was to die for the sin of the world, to rise again, and to be her High Priest, and her King. "In that she hath poured this ointment on my body, she did it for my burial." Priests and kings in Israel were thus anointed. (1 Kings ix. 16 ; 1 Sam. xii. 3—5 ; 1 Chron. xvi. 22 ; Ps. cv. 15 ; cxxiii. 2 ; xlv. 7.) Mary saw before her "the Messiah the Prince," and she came to anoint the most holy." (Dan. ix.

24, 25.) The Jordan had witnessed the Divine unction of His life; and this ointment symbolized resurrection life. (Rom. viii. 11; Heb. xiii. 20.) "Ye denied the Holy One and the Just. And killed the prince of life, whom God hath raised from the dead." Well might Christ exhibit the faith of the woman by saying, wheresoever His Gospel was preached in the whole world, that which she had done should be told for a memorial of her. But was it not marvellous that not one of His disciples should have ever proposed any public, rubrical demonstration of His Messiahship? "When his disciples saw it"—not Judas, not the Pharisees—but, "When his disciples saw it, *they* had indignation, saying, To what purpose is this waste? For this ointment might have been sold for much, and given to the poor."

Odious zeal, odious charity! how must the fleshly mind have grated upon the Divine, and have wounded that generous heart who saw in the precious unction the symbol of the life He was laying down for them, and of the life He was about to take again for them. "Ye have the poor always with you, but me ye have not always."

The moment was then at hand when the tragic scene was to take place, for only in the next chapter in the Sacred Record, we find Mary at the foot of the cross, to watch the expiring life that was to be laid down, and to be taken again. She had not, like the favoured few in the intervening time, been invited to eat with Him the holy supper, which might have so enlightened them, increased their faith, and

strengthened them for their great commissions. (Matt. xxvi. 7—27.) No, but the less favoured object had been one in spirit with Him, and had been taught of Him.

The life of the Holy One expended, we read, "The women returned, and prepared spices and ointments; and rested the Sabbath-day according to the commandment." (Luke xxiii. 56.)

I shall show you later that this preparation was to anoint Christ King, and not, as some suppose, to embalm Him; Nicodemus, and Joseph of Arimathea had done that (John ix. 38—40); and the women had seen the sepulchre sealed with the Roman seal. The sacred hours of the Sabbath passed away, but how had they been spent? Whether in public worship or in private, we are sure those women had been in communion in spirit with Him who had left this earth; their God and King was not dead; the holy temple in which He had dwelt was in the sepulchre beneath an imperial signet; but it was, too, beneath the seal of a higher Power, whose fiat had gone forth that it should rise, and before whom the crust of earth could only roll back its sepulchral door.

St. Matthew tells us, "There was Mary Magdalene and the other Mary sitting over against the sepulchre;" and St. John, "The first day of the week cometh Mary Magdalene early, when it was yet dark, unto the sepulchre." The Jews' Sabbath was from sunset on Friday evening to the same time on Saturday evening; therefore, we may suppose, when

the Sabbath closed, Mary again stole away to the holy place she had so lately left, to commence again the vigil of the dead. The dark, cold watch of the midnight hour could not extinguish the faith and love which glowed in her bosom; the darkness of the midnight hour, the awfulness of all that surrounded her, could not appal her soul; the glitter and the clash of the Roman arms could not daunt her courage. Mary saw the legions of hell which watched the Holy One; she could not force her from the spot. Yes, there were legions from hell there (Rev. xii. 4, 5, 7, 9); but Mary's placid, waiting spirit was in heaven, all beside was silent as death to her.

Christ had said to His disciples, "Sleep on now," but it was not possible, in that dark, tempestuous night of hell's fiercest conflict, that they could sleep? The beloved John, who had leaned upon His breast in that last supper; he who had received the choicest revelation of the four evangelists, even the very outpouring of that bosom on which he had lain;—did he sleep while Mary watched? Simon the Son of Jonas; he who had been so many times divinely instituted to take up the commission of his Lord; who had received from Him the keys of the kingdom of God; "The promise of the Father; he who had been saved from hell;—did he sleep while Mary watched? The twelve who had so constantly heard the appalling decree of heaven and hell, "The Son of man shall be betrayed unto the chief priests, and they shall condemn him to death, and shall deliver him to the Gentiles to crucify him: and the third day he shall rise again;"—did th

up while Mary watched? The chosen witnesses of the configuration, who there heard Him speak of His decease, saw His resurrection and ascension glory;—did they sleep while Mary watched? Yes, the Shepherd was smitten, and the sheep were scattered; but Mary lingered about the cross, gazed on the closing scene there; her soul mingled its sympathy with the earth as it groaned, and shook, and rent; sympathized with the heavens as they darkened over the solemn scene. She watched the mangled corse to the sepulchre, sat over it till the solemnities of the solemn feast-day called away, and at their close she again waited there till He should rise. And to that monument of grace and faith the first Saviour first appeared. “He appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had cast seven devils.” (Mark 16:7.) What was Mary a type of at that moment with her sorrowful Head? Not only of a poor outcast saved to stand no longer an abject being to the end of time; a subject for a Pharisee’s scorn or a Raphael; an object for a holier Pharisee to look down upon with contempt and pity; she was there a type of the redeemed Church out of whom Christ will cast out all devils, no better and no worse than she. “Whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one command, he shall be guilty of all.” But turn again to the type of a Church, which is to be a miracle of resurrection life, from the death of unbelief into a life of righteousness; she did not say, “We thought that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel,” she “stood without at the sepulchre weeping: and as

palmerworm. "A day of darkness and of gloominess of clouds and of thick darkness." I say, then, do we believe in, seek, and rest in a dead Saviour? Do we weep, stoop down, and look into the sepulchre? The seasons in which He is striving with us to convince us deeply of sin; to tell us that God is not such an one as we are; that He cannot look upon sin but with the abhorrence. The fevered limb, the tortured brain, the heart stripped of every earthly comfort, with every form and sort of human misery, are all to convince of sin. When it is Christ manifests to us the high, and holy, and exalted nature of the Eternal God. "Holy, holy, holy, Lord of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory. vi. 3.) "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, who was, and is, and is to come." (Rev. iv. 8.) These are the ascriptions of praise in heaven, just that, which our misery is creating, eliciting, to be everlastingly established. The spiritual warfare in our world is for the exhibition of the evil nature. The Flood was to make sin felt, for the

and yet how do we commemorate these two great events of the world's history, sent to teach us the awful nature, the awful depth of sin? By giving Noah's Arks to our children, and crosses to those of riper years.

Mary, as she stooped and wept over the sepulchre, had been convinced of sin, and the Church she represented must be convinced of sin; out of her must be cast *seven* devils; Then she will hear a voice that will never be dumb to her again, "Woman, why weepest thou? whom seekest thou?" or, "Mary," which means exalted, or the myrrh of the sea of life. (Esth. ii. 12; Ps. xlv. 8; Cant. i. 13; iii. 6; iv. 6, 14; v. 1; v. 13.) And she will answer, "Rabboni, Master, Excellent Teacher, come from God." Then will the mystery of the past be explained; sin was to lead her to Christ; the cross, the midnight watch, the sealed sepulchre, its still more appalling void, the bitter falling tear, the last bend of the knee to look again, the last sad, apparently hopeless search, were all *to teach*, to convince of sin, and to teach her to lay hold of life: "Of sin, because they believe not on me." "Rabboni, Master, Excellent Teacher, come from God."

Contrast this consummated faith with that of the still unperfected state of the disciples of Christ at that time—at this time? "As yet they knew not the Scripture, that he must rise again from the dead. Then the disciples went away again to their own homes." (John xx. 9, 10.) "Their words seemed to them as idle tales, and they believed them not." (Luke xxiv. 6, 8, 11.) And, as we have seen before,

even after Christ had appeared to them, and again given to them their commission, He found them still at the sea of Tiberias, saying, "I go a fishing. We also go with thee."

Not so with Mary. The last specific mention we have of her in the Sacred Record, leads us on to the highest conception we can have of her perfected faith and state: "Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father." We have seen her before anoint Christ to His burial,—typical of the resurrection life in Himself; we have seen her preparing the spices and ointments, which, as I have said, could not be to embalm Christ. Nicodemus had done that, and the sepulchre was sealed upon the dead; and yet the women were at the guarded spot, with the spices they had prepared. I do not say that the light of truth was clear in Mary's mind; but the light of the realm of everlasting light was just dispelling the last shadow of darkness from her soul. Her search was for the living, and not for the dead; she had heard the Divine fiat, "Come forth;" and she had seen Lazarus rise. The promised "third day," or the fourth, the day of her brother's resurrection, might clash in her mind; but I believe Mary was there to receive and to anoint her Messiah, King. He was then reigning in her heart, and she would have set Him over the universal realm of sanctified affection. "Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father." His was not, then, to be an earthly reign, but a spiritual indwelling in the hearts of His people. "Touch me not." Mortal hands might not, could not pour the royal

unction ; supreme, sovereign life, and government were then to crown the Royal head. The Son was then no longer to be a dependent being upon the God, but the indwelling God was to reign over the Son, the representative of all material creation (1 Cor. xv. 28) ; that which had not been before. (Mark xiii. 32.) "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth." (Matt. xxviii. 18.)

"KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS."

"Touch me not." It might not be, but the faith of Mary was again pre-eminently evidenced to "the whole world." (Matt. xxvi. 13.) "Thy faith hath saved thee ; go in peace." And was she not a trophy of grace,—a pile of arms taken from the enemy ? Is she not this day, a sword which the Spirit of God is wielding against him ? This was why our Saviour gave her history the prominence He did in the Sacred Record ; an example and an incentive to His brethren in the ministry to gather trophies,—piles of arms out of the kingdom of Satan, and to bring them into His kingdom. "Verily I say unto you, Wheresoever this gospel shall be preached in the whole world, there shall also this, that this woman hath done, be told for a memorial of her." And not only so, but He would make her an instrument of service to them, and, as we have already seen, of rebuke : "Go unto my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father ; and to my God, and your God." (John xx. 17.)

I think this one of the most sublime passages of Revelation ; nothing can surpass it ; here earth unites with heaven,—the

Church militant with the Church triumphant ; this is the culminating point of the Gospel of Christ ; the meridian splendour of the Sun of Righteousness, with healing in His wings, could rise no longer. The Father of the Son of God, our *Father* ; the God *of* God, our God. Christ was the mighty Angel who came down from heaven, who stood with one foot upon the earth, and the other upon the sea, and united them in one. (Rev. x. 1, 2.) "After the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God : " "from henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool."

Surely it was a beautiful acknowledgment of the faith and faithfulness of Mary, a high eulogy of her *integrity* and fitness, that her last office should have been to re-assemble, reassure, and to preach this most deep, and high, and holy, and glorious farewell sermon of her sovereign Lord to the scattered, incredulous, and unfaithful Church. Yes, it will be said, but God hath chosen the foolish, weak, and base things of the world to confound the things which are mighty. This is His will, and man cannot control that. This is adding sin to sin ; He does not mock His servants ; these base things are not the publicly-instituted instruments in His service ; He only employs them as a reproach when the Church is unfaithful. And it will be said again, Mary loved much because she had much forgiven ; but let us ask, which is the greatest debtor, he who is not condemned by the world for his sin,—he whom God, in His manifold wisdom, suffers to escape the

emnation of the world, that he may thereby have
 eney for holy service, that, perhaps, nothing else would
 him, and to whom He has given ten, twenty talents,—
 ntages and position; or he who has received only one
 it, no advantages, has sinned ignorantly, and is condemned
 he term of this present life, but forgiven of God? See
 ist's just exposition of the subject in the parable of the
 sons. (Matt. xxi. 28.)

riery ordeal is absolutely necessary discipline for sanctifi-
 on, and this sacred record of Mary might well serve us to
 t the coming crisis, the third vial of the wrath of God. If
 its blast be past, the Church be found as faithful as she,
 urified and as meet for her Master's service, she will say,
 faithfulness He hath afflicted me." Let it ever be for
 true Church a received axiom, that deep, dark, painful,
 ing vicissitude, is the greatest possible proof of God's
 erest watchfulness and love. While Zion is at ease, all
 dark realities of the conflict in which she is engaged will
 to her but as idle tales; "the mystery of God," and
 e mystery of iniquity," will dwindle into fable; the
 ole will supplant the invisible; she will go away again to
 own home,—to the world, to its pleasures, its pursuits,
 riches, and its glory; but when a trumpet is blown in the
 , the people will be afraid.

"The fluttering dove skimm'd the dark waters o'er,
 But the dread main had neither peak nor shore;
 She to the ark returned; the Ark of God
 Took in the essayer of the shoreless flood."

H H '9

We have seen forgiveness to have been the moral splendour of the Cross of Christ ; and here, we see forgiveness to be the morality of His Gospel—the moral splendour of His Gospel.

My purpose in this undertaking has been to trace the River of Salvation from Eden till it rolls into the ocean of eternity. “To be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee,” was the little hillock we started from ; the stream widened as we proceeded, and here it rolls a broad and a mighty sea into the ocean of unending life. “I ascend to my Father, and you ascend to my Father ; to *my God*, and *your God*.” I say I can trace it no further ; but before I leave its holy waters, I would join in the adoration of the redeemed, “Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty ;” “Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts : the whole earth is full of his glory,” to that Being who has thus opened the kingdom of heaven to all believers, through whom we pass from a life of sin, of consequent suffering, and death to a life of holiness, pardon, and peace. “This is the record that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.” (2 John 11.)

“Even so, come, Lord Jesus.”

CHAPTER XIII.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES.

WE said I cannot trace the River of Salvation any further in this world, but we can track it beyond, even into the acts of the eternal world: "There is a river, the streams of which shall make glad the city of God, the holy place of the dwelling of the most High." (Ps. xlv. 4.) "And he hath made me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb." (Rev. 22. 1.) The throne of God was the source of covenant ; of redemptive mercy, of the promise of a Messiah to the world ; when that promise was fulfilled, that throne was the source of mercy, of recovering grace, of "the promise of the Father," even the gift of His own Spirit to the end of the world. "He shall abide with you for ever." What life is now destined to flow from that source we do not know ; but from Himself that source, He may work till every rebel spirit in universal space surrenders to Him, "the Father of spirits." Let us trace its operation now, and regard it as a guarantee of which it is long to be.

When the promised blessing of the Old Covenant had

ascended up to the throne of God, He became a new Fountain or source of light and life. As clouds are exhaled from the mighty ocean, and return again to water the earth, so from the ocean of God's nature, brought home to us by Christ, rose the white cloud (Rev. xiv. 14; x. 1), from which is again to descend life to the end of time; from which again is to descend rain to fill the pools, showers and dews to water the earth: "*He shall come down like rain upon the mown grass: as showers to water the earth.*" (Ps. lxxii. 6.) "*The rivers run into the sea; yet the sea is not full; unto the place from whence the rivers come, thither they return again.*" (Eccles. i. 7.)

See "the Prince of life" upon his mediatorial throne: "This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. Therefore, being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear."

The Pentecost was not an isolated occurrence in the history of the Church, it was not a miraculous event that was to stand alone to be gazed back upon, but never to see its like again; it was only a more evident, visible manifestation of that which is going on in the hearts of God's people, and which is to go on till the end of time. It was only the Divine inauguration of the spiritual economy under which we live, and also the spiritual induction of Christ's brethren in the ministry into holy office. "Jesus of Nazareth shall destroy this place, and shall change the customs which

loses delivered us." (Acts vi. 14.) In the beginning of Christ's spiritual reign, there was a very marked transition period in the history of the Church,—she passed from glory to glory; "shall not the ministration of the Spirit be rather glorious?"

The ministry of the Spirit is a glorious commission, and to receive the Spirit thereby is a glorious salvation. And thus it is, that this book of the Acts of the Apostles stands before us in a grandeur almost unique, in an attitude quite Divine. The Apostles preached; the people believed, and were saved. The spiritual temple rose upon the Jewish ruin; the New Jerusalem upon the desecrated waste; and hence the prophetic name Jerusalem, from Jireh, Salem (Gen. xiv. 18; xii. 14), a possession of peace and help from the Lord, under Melchisedec, her King.

"Solomon built him an house. Howbeit the most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands; as saith the prophet, Heaven is my throne, and earth is my footstool: what house will ye build me? saith the Lord: or what is the place of my rest? Hath not my hand made all these things?" And then that first Christian martyr, as it were breaks out in jealous rebuke, because the immaterial nature of the spiritual house was rejected and despised by those whom St. Peter called, "you builders." "Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye." (Acts vii. 47—51.)

The priests of the typical temple could not stand to

minister in the spiritual house at Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost, the ministration was too glorious ; "The glory of the Lord had filled the Lord's house." A reign of terror seized the counterfeit order ; they saw five thousand in one day added to that "Temple of God," by, to them, an inexplicable power ; they saw the miraculous cases of healing in the name of Jesus, and were told that they were only types of spiritual healing ; but they heard and saw only to be more stiffnecked, more presumptuous, more satanic ; to resist more and more the Spirit which would have given them life.

The second, third, fourth, and fifth chapters of the Acts seem to present us at once with the grand transition from the dead letter of the Jewish ritual to the holy, and sublime office of the ministry of the Spirit. Not that a spiritual worship was not the intention of the Great Founder of the Jewish Church ; the gospel of Christ by the Spirit, through her as a medium, should have been preached to the world. As we look back do we not see how lucid it might have been made by the teaching of the Spirit ? It was the neglect of this which was the root of all her sin, the cause of her rejection of God, and of her expulsion by Him. This was the root of her rejection of Christ : He was not believed in, not recognised, when He came, because the Divine ritual which set Him forth, and the sure word of prophecy which most faithfully portrayed Him, had both alike been neglected ; and hence it was the priesthood, those who should have known, and received Him, who delivered Him to the Gentiles

crucified. (John xviii. 3; Matt. xx. 18, 19.) "We no king but Cæsar." Oh, horrible denial of "the e of life !" "Thou that destroyest the temple, and build- in three days, save thyself." (xxvii. 40.) It was that of hell, that defiance, and rejection of heaven's best which took away sin, and gave life to the world. As piritual temple rose upon the ruin of Jerusalem, in ice of the rabble of the priesthood, in defiance of hell, in ulous rapidity and glory, they conferred together to see further could be done. Rulers, and elders, and scribes, annas the high priest, and Caiaphas, and John, and Alex- ; and as many as were of the kindred of the high ;, were gathered together at Jerusalem. "And when they et the Apostles in the midst they asked, By what power what name have ye done this ? What shall we do to men ? For that indeed a notable miracle hath been by them is manifest to all them that dwell at Jerusalem ; ve cannot deny it." (Acts iv. 5 ; vii. 16.) "Then the high : rose up, and all they that were with him, which is the of the Sadducees, and were filled with indignation, and heir hands on the Apostles, and put them in the common n." (v. 17, 18.) Peter's preaching, in answer to this , diabolical proceeding is lofty, it is majestic—read con- dly, it is divinely thrilling ; he went back to the little e of covenant grace ; he tracked the river in its widening e, and preached unto them Jesus. "The God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers hath glo-

rified his Son Jesus. But ye denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you, and killed the Prince (or author) of life, whom God hath raised from the dead ; whereof ye are witnesses. Repent ye, therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord." The song of praise of the Church, when let go by the rulers, is both scriptural and believing : " They lifted up their voice to God with one accord, and said, Lord, thou art God, which hast made heaven and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is : who by the mouth of thy servant David hast said, Why did the heathen rage, and the people imagine vain things ? The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord, and against his Christ." (Acts iii. and iv.) Oh, let the spiritual builders of the New Jerusalem never fear ; the devil in man will thus wage war against them ; but they have the promises which the Apostles had : " These things saith the first and the last, which was dead, and is alive ; Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer : behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried ; be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." (Rev. ii. 9, 10.) If this warfare were with the heathen world, it would seem in the straightforward course of conflict and of victory ; but warfare against God's people, with ourselves, is terrible to contemplate ; the powers of God become alien, the powers against Him, which should have been all for Him. Oh, with

this unfaithfulness, declension, ruin, sin, how can the world be saved ?

Christ had said of that body of the priesthood, "That upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias, son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar." (Matt. xxiii. 35.) And here, in the midst of their rage and fury, their own conscience added the blood of Christ to the spectral train, for they said to the Apostles, "Ye intend to bring this man's blood upon us." (Acts v. 28.) In the Revelation we find this accusation of wrong and murder against the priesthood reaching onward even to the present time. "They have shed the blood of saints and prophets." (Rev. xvi. 6.) As I have said, with this spiritual, internal warfare with ourselves, how can the world be saved ? Let us wage war manfully with the enemy, but we have everything to fear from conflicting with the children of God. Their prayers cannot die upon the breeze nor be lost in the conflicting elements ; they ascend up before God in their Intercessor's hand, and bring down a curse even upon His own people.

But to return to the fierce conflict with the powers of darkness, when the foundation of the Christian Church was laid, at its consecration by His Spirit, at its dedication by His glory entering into it. Hell was, as it were, let loose upon her in her infant state ; truly "the serpent cast out of his mouth water as a flood, that he might cause her to be carried

away of the flood." The extinction of the Church in our world is ever his aim ; but, oh, let her take courage, and should she now be sent forth, as the Apostolic Church was, is she not, is not truth strong enough to stand upon its own base ; to go forth in spirit, without any secular arm whatever ? "When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him." The example of the Apostles, as set forth in this book, might be her example herein : their boldness, the soul-moving pathos of their preaching, their Divine wisdom, strong arguments, and miracles, all evidenced the truth, that the mantle of their Head had fallen upon them. "Go, stand and speak in the temple to the people all the words of this life." (Acts v. 19, 20.) That life they preached with power sent down from heaven. "Jesus Christ of Nazareth is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner. Neither is there salvation in any other : for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." (Acts iv. 11, 12.) And we read, "Peter was filled with the Holy Ghost ;" and again, "believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women ; inasmuch as they brought forth the sick into the streets, and laid them on beds and couches, that at the least the shadow of Peter passing by might overshadow some of them." (Acts v. 14, 15.) To Peter had been given "the gifts of healing." And it is indeed beautiful to see the Divine unction and influence of a faithful servant of God

overshadowing His people. This will ever be the case if they can say, with the Apostle, "We gave ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word." (Acts vi. 4.) But let us not be discouraged if we have not the particular gifts of Peter. "There are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all."

And there is not another book in the Bible which sets forth to us this doctrine of the Spirit as does the Acts of the Apostles. The Spirit is the life of the soul, of the Church. Mark the emphatic expressions, "They were all filled with the Holy Ghost." (Acts ii. 4.) "Then Peter, filled with the Holy Ghost." (Acts iv. 8.) "Then Paul, filled with the Holy Ghost." "The disciples were filled with the Holy Ghost." (Acts xiii. 9, 52.) "Barnabas was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost." (Acts xi. 24.) And so we find of all the apostles. They were more under the control of God than their own wills. See how absolutely this is taught by the inspired penman, "they were forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the word in Asia. They assayed to go into Bithynia: but the Spirit suffered them not." (Acts xvi. 6, 7.) "And finding disciples at Tyre, we tarried there seven days: who said to Paul through the Spirit, that he should not go up to Jerusalem." (Acts xxi. 4.) "Thus saith the Holy Ghost, so shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man that owneth this girdle." (Acts xxi. 11.) This teaching prepares us to understand Heaven's reiterated injunction, "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches."

The doctrine of the Spirit is a sublime doctrine ; it takes us out of ourselves, and we become "able ministers of the new covenant." Oh, it is more than sublime, it is a vital doctrine ; it is more, it is a Divine doctrine ; it resembles God—it is God-like ; it is more, it is God. "Ye are the temple of the living God ; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them ; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people." (2 Cor. vi. 16.) "He that is joined to the Lord is one spirit. What ? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost in you, which ye have of God ?" (1 Cor. vi. 17—19.) Oh, I say, it is a vital, a stupendous doctrine. The work of the ministry is God's work. "Ye are not your own." If we could recognise more this omniscience, omnipotence, within ourselves, we should be less fearful, less unbelieving, and less petulant, less anxious about results, and more confident of victory. Faith is victory ; not the presumption that thinks God is blind to sin ; but faith is victory over sin. "Who art thou, O great mountain ? before Zerubabel a plain : and he shall bring forth the headstone with shoutings, Grace, grace unto it." And how ? "By my Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts."

These extracts of the vital, controlling office of the Spirit were not confined to the time of the Apostles, nor of the early Fathers. The design of God was not that the effusion of the Spirit should diminish, but that it should go on to increase in the hearts of men till God reign wholly therein, till His kingdom be wholly restored. Retrogression is not of

Him. I can affirm in His presence that I have sometimes had such answers to prayer, and such guidance of God by His Word and Spirit, that I could truly say, "The Lord spake unto me." But, oh, the seeking, waiting, praying, humble frame of mind, and the contrite spirit that bring such answers of peace and of right doing, are of too rare occurrence, nor do I know how they are always to be kept in active motion, and in harmony. The human heart and the world are too treacherous to suffer this, and hell is too busy for it to be scarcely possible. Come, O mighty God, and reign in us! With Thee all things are possible.

Here, then, I must again say a word upon the subject of the mighty striving of the Spirit upon the heart of man. We must listen to His suggestions; to the voice of conscience, which is His voice; to the Inspired Word, which is His voice; we are a great deal too flippant herein; we do not obey the Bible, its Divine rule is as much above our action as heaven is higher than the earth, and God's thoughts above our thoughts. Progress is in the struggle to obey to the very letter and spirit of the word. Oh, then, let us look again, and consecrate the Christian Temple wherein God is to dwell to obedience; to the strictest adherence to obedience to the voices of the Spirit: and He will be faithful to crown obedience with grace. I might refer you to the Antichristian world, and show you terrible judgment for disobedience: to Pharaoh; how the Spirit of God strove with him, and to his final overthrow, because he resisted that Spirit: to Balaam,

and to Saul, the most prominent examples of perverted grace; but it is to ourselves, to the true Church, I point you for examples of perverted grace, of the resistance to God's Spirit. See the erasable handwriting which overarched her antediluvian course,—“My Spirit shall not always be with man.” (Gen. vi. 3.) See the Divine promise which overarched her Jewish course, “I am with you, saith the Lord of hosts: according to the word that I covenanted with you when ye came out of Egypt, so my Spirit shall remain among you: fear ye not.” (Hag. ii. 4, 5.) And yet, as I have said before, this was the root of her declension, and her fall: the radical cause of her rejection of Christ. And yet, as that handwriting was there, what affectionate caution overarched the lofty, imposing dome of the Christian Temple: “Quench not the Spirit.” “Grieve not the Spirit.” And yet I think she has as much rejected the Third Person in the Holy Trinity as the Antediluvian Church rejected God; or, as the Jewish Church rejected the Second Person in the Trinity. “The three are one.” And I see, now overarching her lofty position, her “gates of brass, and bars of iron,” “there fell a great star from heaven, burning as it were a lamp.” “He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.”

A temple of the Holy Ghost, a child of God, cannot enter into a church where the name of Christ is not faithfully preached, to say nothing of the synagogues of Satan; cannot read an Antichristian book, nor enter but to

varingly into the world at all, without danger and loss. Who, then, can help resisting the Spirit? how is the journey of life to be performed at all? The command is authoritative, Divine, and absolute,—“Eat no bread, nor drink water in this place, *nor turn again by the same way as thou camest.*” The way to heaven has never been made wider since our great Example cast it up in its plain straightforwardness,—“Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.” Oh, let us escape for our lives. “The broadway:” her gate is the way to death and hell, and over it is written even in this life, “Alas, my brother!”

How much more does this apply to the priestly office! How circumspect and straightforward should his course be, and how endued with all the graces of the Spirit! He should in word and deed be a living manifestation of God. The Holy Ghost is the agent whom the Father hath sent in the name of Christ, and, therefore, without that in-dwelling Divine Presence a servant cannot be a messenger of His; and, perhaps, a counterfeit ambassador is a more serious offence than the man not born of God supposes. Bar-jesus was a counterfeit of Bar-jona. (Acts xiii. 6.) Hear the sentence, shall I say, of death, pronounced upon him: “Thou shalt be blind, not seeing the sun for a season. And immediately there fell on him a mist and a darkness; and he went about seeking some one to lead him by the hand.” The case was only a palpable manifestation of that spiritual darkness and judicial

death which overtakes the untaught, counterfeit preacher of the Word of Life,—“If the light which is in thee be darkness, how great shall that darkness be.” And by their dark obscurities, it is evident their light is darkness; that they are going about seeking some one to lead them by the hand. “If the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch.” A fitness for the office is not a state of unascertained certainty, —“One thing I know, that whereas I was blind, now I see.”

What may be said of the Teacher may also be said of the hearer. If at confirmation, spiritual men would only admit into the Church those in whose hearts the Day-star had arisen; not excluding them absolutely, but for a season, with the tenderness of a good Shepherd caring only for the life of His flock, it would lead to more earnest inquiry, and prevent that laxity of communion, which is, I am sure, the cause of the spiritual death of the souls of masses and multitudes of people. “Take heed, therefore, unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the Church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.” (Acts xx. 28.)

While none may presume, let none be discouraged who in the smallest degree possess the principle of life; God can work as mightily by the one talent as the ten; every labourer in the vineyard is alike the object of His sustaining grace and power. There were very distinctive qualities and attainments in the Apostles themselves.

Because St. Peter wrote less than St. Paul, we are not,

therefore, to infer that his ministry was crowned with less extraordinary success ; on the contrary, there was a miraculous power that we do not at all hear of in the preaching of St. Paul. As we read connectedly the first twelve chapters of the Acts, we see floods of light radiating his mind and spirit ; floods of life issuing from his mouth ; the Word was to him the key of the kingdom of God ; he opened it to believers, and multitudes entered in and were saved.

If you read collectedly St. Peter's first Epistle, you will see the beautiful effect that the in-dwelling Spirit had upon his mind. As his spiritual understanding grasped the bright future, all material existence ceased to affect him ; that mind then soared to the inheritance of the saints in light : " Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you." The whole Epistle is a perfect rule for a Christian Church ; the servant is lost sight of in the great work of the Master ; titles, gain, and dignities are despised ; all is lost in the one alone name by which we can be saved : " Ye were as sheep going astray ; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of souls." Christ is still the Bishop of souls, and Peter should only aspire to be His faithful servant.

The second Epistle is broad and extensive upon the subject of prophecy ; his enlightened mind seemed to scan that long vista of the future, which is hidden from the less instructed

student of the Word of God: "No prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation." Who beside a St. Peter, a St. Paul, or a St. John, could venture such an assertion? O thou Divine Teacher who taught them, do thou teach us, that one in spirit with the Lord our God, we may with Him, and by Him, stand upon the dome of time, and read the seasons in His hand, the dwelling-places of His power and of His glory,—“For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen.”

There is not one of the sacred writers who attached more importance to the sacred writings than St. Peter. They were the source from which he drew his spiritual life, the daily sustenance of that life. (1 Epist. i. 11, 23—25; ii. 2.) And then in the 2 Epist. i. 2, 3, he breaks forth in excursive strains as though all grace came by “The Word;” and having God Incarnate therein, can we deny that it does not? The kingdom of God is untangible; through the medium of the Word it is tangible, a present reality. “Grace and truth be multiplied unto you through the *knowledge of God*, and of Jesus our Lord.” And mark well his repetitious style upon the subject, so important in his own estimation; his confirmation of what he had already urged,—“According as his Divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, *through the knowledge of Him* that hath called us to glory and virtue.” Mark, again, his recurrent style; how he unites the life of the Word with the life, and with the eternal life of the soul, “*Whereby*

are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises : *that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature.*" Oh, let us more and more, like the Apostles, value our Bibles, first and last, and always draw life from hence ; in them we are baptized into the Divine nature. In the Word was life ; but let us not neglect either the sure word of prophecy : it is a light shining in a dark place,—“The life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness.” The world before Christ could have known nothing of Him but by prophecy ; every promise, every type was prophetic ; their daily service was prophetic, so that the world must have been, indeed, in darkness, and God in Christ no Redeemer to the past, but for the Spirit of prophecy. Contemplate the words, “Searching what, or what manner of time the *Spirit of Christ* which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow.” (1 Epis. Peter i. 11.) Oh, let us beware how we resist, reject, despise the Spirit of prophecy ; let us rise magnanimous, Christ-like above judgment and the wrath of God, by looking them in the face ; and let us press towards the glory that shall follow, by believing in Him. The Church, one with Him, can no more fail than he failed ; let her gird herself in His strength and triumph, and she will shine forth from behind the dark cloud in His glory just as death to Him was the prelude of life. The world, the flesh, and the devil, must be crucified in us, and then “the Spirit of Christ” in us will be manifested. “Trust ye in the Lord for ever : for in the Lord Jevovah is everlasting strength.” (Isa. xxvi. 4.)

CHAPTER XIV.

THE CONVERSION AND CALLING OF ST. PAUL.

THE conversion of St. Paul was not a greater miracle of grace than other conversions, but more sudden, and therefore more apparent. As the book of Job is a relation of unseen realities, so the conversion of the Apostle was a palpable manifestation of Divine power, made so palpable expressly to be a part of Revelation. Not that I mean to deny for a moment the visible appearance of Jesus Christ; but His spiritual presence is so entirely one with His visible, that the last need not necessarily be more felt than the first. Jesus was seen by Saul, and the Holy Ghost was given by the laying on of the hands of Ananias; but these were only gracious revelations of what really occurs at every conversion. By faith we see Jesus; and the Holy Ghost is given by the instrumentality of the minister, when he preaches prayerfully, faithfully, and earnestly in the name of Christ. Just as Job was a gracious revelation of our conflict with Satan, and of victory through faith and trust in God, so was St. Paul of all true conversion, to be chronicled in a revelation to our world, which, like him, is dead in sin.

It is more than probable that Saul was amongst the priests and Pharisees who conferred together to see what could be done to hinder the progress of the Christian Church, of the spiritual temple. (Acts iv. 6, 15.) See the type of that conflict in Ezra iv. He was one of the principal accomplices in the martyrdom of Stephen. All the fire and impetuosity of manhood's prime were then concentrated in diabolical service. (Acts vii. 58 ; xxii. 20.) His noble and ingenuous confession tells us how he had been given over to believe a lie ; how truly he believed himself to be actuated by lawful, high, and honourable motive. See the security of his mind at a moment when he stood upon the brink of hell. " I persecuted this way unto the death, binding and delivering into prisons both men and women." (Acts xxii. 3, 4.) " And I verily thought with myself, that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth. Many of the saints did I shut up in prison, having received authority from the chief priests ; and when they were put to death, I gave my voice against them. And I punished them oft in every synagogue, and compelled them to blaspheme ; and being exceedingly mad against them, I persecuted them even unto strange cities." (Acts xxvi. 5, 9—11.) And what was the root of all this diabolical proceeding ? " After the most strictest sect of our religion I lived a Pharisee."

Thus we see that an externalism and self-righteousness lead a man to commit the deeds of a devil, and that he may be so beguiled by that evil spirit as not only to have his conscience perfectly at rest, but he may be deluded to believe

that he is serving God. How changed the man when Christ Jesus was made unto him righteousness!

The narration of the conversion opens with almost an appalling insight into the Satanic character of the man. "Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest, and desired of him letters to Damascus to the synagogues, that if he found any of this way, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem." (Acts ix.) I have said Satanic. The expression is very expressive of this. "Yet breathing out"—rage, fury, diabolical, murderous intention, is what is expressed. The "yet" refers to that black proceeding which had gone before, where, of the murder of Stephen, it is said, "Saul was consenting unto his death." (Acts viii. 1.) A blacker, deeper, more fallen child of hell cannot be presented unto us. Let the root of that evil nature in the man always remain before us. "After the most straitest sect of our religion I lived a Pharisee." This doctrine of self-righteousness is "the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes," so emphatically condemned in the Church of Pergamos, in our own day of the Church, "so hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes, which thing I hate." (Rev. ii. 15.) Are there now—not in the world, but in the Church—Sauls, murderous, breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord? "Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer." God is high and holy above all human thought. He knows the

hearts of men, and nothing can be hid from Him. Oh, let us beware of pharisaical pride! it is a deep, foul, leprous wound; I believe often festering, rankling, where it is not even known to exist, in those who hold the fairest positions in the true Church. They are doing the devil's work, casting stumblingblocks before the true Israel, committing fearful havoc amongst the members of Christ's body. Can He who walks in the midst of the seven candlesticks see this, and hold His peace? No, it is impossible; He will contend and fight with His own people, and much more with the instruments of His purpose, till pharisaical pride, every bit of sin be rooted out; and then He will transplant them to higher service in higher spheres. I would say again, "Let it sink deep into our hearts." "After the most straitest sect of our religion I lived a Pharisee," because under that cloak may be the breathings of threatenings, murder, slaughter. Old, self-righteous Pharisee, look again at this picture of yourself, whatever guise you may wear to conceal it. "Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord." But I am sure there are many, very many, in our Church to whom God is graciously saying, "This thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitanes, which I also hate." Oh, blessed band! you will enjoy the other phase of the character before us—that of St. Paul after a Saul.

"As he journeyed, he came near Damascus: and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven: and he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? And he said, Who art thou,

which glowed in the bosom of their Master, throbbed in the bosoms of his servants in the early Church : He had not said in vain, "Learn of me," and in that spirit of love, and of joy in the Holy Ghost, all they said was force, pathos, and power ; all was the result of the indwelling Spirit. Thus it is that the book of the Acts of the Apostles is one of the most marvellous of the sacred writings, there is a soul-thrilling pathos throughout the whole ; my mind and spirit are always rivetted as I read it connectedly, and I am sorry to come to the end. And yet in the face of all the mighty power, and vital influence pervading this book, which is seen in it to fill the Apostles, man denies negatively the first rudiment of the Christian religion, the work of the Holy Spirit. What a forlorn thing would the Bible be without it ; the Church, yes, and even the gospel of Christ itself, would be a dead abstract. Against such as deny the doctrine of the Spirit, the Pentecostal baptism, and these early Christians, will rise up in judgment and condemn them ; they were palpable manifestations of it, and are here chronicled in a revelation to a lost world, for ever a demonstrative evidence of God manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit.

"Brother Saul." Oh, it was a holy, a beautiful salutation. Who could resist the fraternal appeal ? No discord, no jar, but one in Christ. "Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost." Ministers of the Gospel of Christ, analyse that sermon, imitate it, it is the perfection of a sermon ; and

do not quarrel with your people, as I heard a foolish shepherd do for twenty minutes, because their eyes had not been opened before; rejoice that the time is come for them to be opened, and believing in your mission, and in the name of Him that sent you, they will be opened: "Immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales: and he received sight forthwith." Then the work of conversion was complete. Saul was "born of the Spirit," "born of God," and he then made an open profession, "He arose, and was baptized." Thus we see, Saul neither received life in the rite of the Jewish ritual, circumcision, nor in the rite of the Christian Church, baptism, but quite independent of either. But when he had received the truth, he made an open confession of it. That new birth ever retained its grand distinctive feature in his mind, "Last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time." (1 Cor. xv. 8.) But there was a peculiar feature in that conversion to which I would particularly direct your attention. The natural eye saw Jesus, the natural ear heard his voice, the Divine Presence shone round about Saul, the strong man armed surrendered his usurped dominion, avowedly, but Saul was not "born of God," not saved, not a fit person for the ministry, till he had received the Holy Ghost: "After that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise." (Eph. i. 13.)

There is a state in which the understanding is truly enlightened, it may be by education, by the usual routine of Christian instruction, by approximation with the children of

tions, demonstrations of truth ; clear, plain setting forth the spiritual warfare going on in the human family, of mystery of God," and of "the mystery of iniquity," in of the foundation of our faith. Hence, too, those (manly distinctions between a mere ritual service, a spiritual worship ; the learned pharisee, and the man of God could well define all the fundamental doctrines of Gospel, in grand, bold distinction from a dead externalism "O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you ? only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by works of the law, or by the hearing of faith ? Are ye foolish ? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now perfect by the flesh ?" Herein, too, the learned Pharisee a great advantage over the unlearned fishermen of Galilee. The deep disquisitions of his mind almost overreached capacity, so that they could only say of his writings, which are some things hard to be understood." (2 Peter 15, 16.)

As the great Apostle of the Gentiles, St. Paul was himself a monument of grace, of the extensiveness of God's design to a world dead in sin ; of that Divine, vital, constraining power which men cannot resist,—“Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power.” (Ps. cx. 3.)

The change in the man was so great, and so perfect, we marvel as we read, in him was fulfilled the prophe-

The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid ; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together ; and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed ; their young ones shall lie down together ; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice' den." (Isa. xi. 6—10.)

This figurative language was truly fulfilled when Saul was changed to a St. Paul, when three thousand souls were added to the Church in one day,—“ In that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people ; to it shall the Gentiles seek : and his rest shall be glorious.” See the great standard-bearer of that ensign, rallying around him the soldiers of the Cross,—“ Saul straightway preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God.” Saul “ increased the more in strength, and confounded the Jews which dwelt at Damascus, proving that this is very Christ.” It was impossible that any transition from one state to another could be more palpable, more tangible than this,—“ I am Jesus whom thou persecutest ;” but now, “ This is very Christ.” The 54th chapter of Isaiah should be read with this sublime record of the Acts of the Apostles, and of the miraculous increase of the Christian Church. The great commission must have been almost overpowering to the mind of the Apostle,—“ He is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name among the Gentiles, and kings, and the children

of Israel." And the ingenuous announcement which followed would not lighten the burden,—“I will show him how great things he must suffer for my name’s sake.” It is beautiful to see a disciple of Christ suffer cheerfully, to hear such an announcement as this with calm delight, not for a moment wishing that his estate should be above his Master’s. Immediately we find St. Paul entering upon his course of affliction,—“The Jews watched the gates day and night to kill him;” and from that time he endured manfully as seeing Him who is invisible, till he died a martyr’s death.

But I must for one moment more trace his career through this grand epic of the Christian life, the book of the Acts of the Apostles. St. Paul’s commission from his Master was, to bear His name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel; and as we see his undaunted spirit before Felix, in that bold confession in the 24th chapter, so that “Felix trembled, and answered, Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee;” and in that still more grand oration before “King Agrippa,” in the 26th chapter, so that the preacher, as it were, perceived the melting spirit of his auditor, and could say, “King Agrippa, I know that thou believest,” and the astounded monarch could only answer, “Paul, almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian;”—I say, with these records only, without following the Apostle through all the cities of the Gentiles whither he went, we see how faithfully he did bear the name of Jesus before the Gentiles, and before kings.

And see him, too, before "the children of Israel;" see him before "the chief priests and all their council." (xxii. 30.) "Paul, earnestly beholding the Council, said, Men and brethren, I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day. And the high priest Ananias commanded them that stood by him to smite him on the mouth. Then said Paul unto him, God shall smite thee, thou whited wall: for sittest thou to judge me after the *law*, and commandest me to be smitten *contrary to the law*?" "And the night following the Lord stood by him, and said, Be of good cheer, Paul: for as thou hast testified of me in Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome." (xxiii. 1, 2, 11.) I say, we need not follow the Apostle through those beautiful Epistles written to his own people the Jews, to prove how faithfully he did bear the name of Christ to them. Perhaps we can never do so more faithfully than by rearing our standard, the Divine law, and by appealing to our enemies thereby, as St. Paul did before Ananias. That standard is Christ's standard. Blessed Saviour, give us more grace, that we may never lower it before thy enemies, and our enemies; but may we pass on with that glorious ensign before the Lord God of Israel; and then, if the people obey not the truth, we may say, with St. Paul, "Your blood be upon your own heads; I am clean." (xviii. 6.) "Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men." (xx. 26.)

His magnanimous disregard of affliction, persecution, and

even of life, save as a stewardship which he held for God, ever afterwards was one of the grand features of his course. "Now, behold, I go bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there: save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying that bonds and affliction abide me. But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the *ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus*, to testify the gospel of the grace of God." (Acts xx. 22—24.) A stronger trial of his faith and stedfastness still awaited him. A prophet again dissuaded him from going up to Jerusalem. "Thus saith the Holy Ghost, So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man that owneth this girdle, and shall deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles. And when we heard these things, both we, and they of that place, besought him not to go up to Jerusalem. Then Paul answered, What mean ye to weep and to break mine heart? for I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus." (Acts xxi. 11—13.) Can we make no application of this subject to ourselves? Christian Church, Gentile Church, are you a St. Paul? Are you ready, not only to be bound, but to die, for the name of the Lord Jesus? Has He shown you how great things you must suffer for His name's sake? And do none of these things move you, so that you may finish the ministry which you have received of the Lord Jesus? Then go forward; it is a glorious thing that "the God of our

fathers hath chosen thee, that thou shouldest know his will, and see that Just One, and shouldest hear the voice of his mouth. For thou shalt be his witness unto all men of what thou hast seen and heard. And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling upon the name of the Lord." (Acts xxii. 14—16.) You are as divinely called as was St. Paul, as divinely endued as he, and as divinely called to holiness of life as he. Your commission is the same. "I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of those things which thou hast seen, and of *those things in the which I will appear* unto thee; delivering thee from the people, unto whom now I send thee, to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them that are sanctified by faith that is in me." (Acts xxvi. 16—18.)

Christian Church, arise, and say, with this noble example of courage, energy, of omnipotent light and life, "Whereupon I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision." A new phase of life may lie before thee, a new calling, new in government, new in position, new in estate; a stronger and more lucid faith and practice may be required of thee; a more humble, holy, conciliating, consistent setting forth of the Gospel of Christ may be demanded of thee. Go forward, be *obedient* to the heavenly vision; when persecution or affliction arise, be not offended; great mercy and glorious

victory always lie beyond conflict; the glorious majesty of Christ's kingdom always beyond faithful, vigorous endurance. "When thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren."

I think the twenty-seventh chapter a very remarkable one; that that great tempest and shipwreck so graphically described in the life of the great Apostle of the Gentiles was not without prophetic meaning. I cannot, as some do, repudiate the Bible as a revelation. To deny the omniscience of God, and the gracious exercise of that attribute towards His elect Church, appears to me rank Atheism, under whatever name the little miserable contraction of mind may exist.

But, even if this historic record be not prophetic, it is still a beautiful emblem of those shipwrecks of the Church which she must suffer in this life, till she be purified, sanctified, and made meet for her eternal inheritance and heaven of rest. St. Paul in that voyage very aptly represents the body of God's ministers, who are to guide her through the coming storm and crisis, rather than the secular arm—the common commander at the helm. I would say then, Believe not the master and owner of the ship more than those things which are spoken by Paul, or you will hear, too late, "Sirs, ye should have hearkened unto me." Let us then hear him. "There stood by me this night the angel of God, whose I am, and whom I serve, saying, Fear not, Paul; lo, God hath given thee all them that sail with thee. Wherefore, sirs, be of good cheer: for I believe God, that it shall be even as it was told me."

Oh, I say, let us listen to Paul, to the spiritual representatives of our Church and nation,—“Except these abide in the ship, ye cannot be saved.” Abide in the true Church; cling together, one body; kill none of the prisoners, cast none overboard, save Paul; save Christ—He is on board. Do not one of you listen to the spurious Church, to the son of the concubine. “Whether is better for you, either that all the sons of Gideon, which are threescore and ten persons, reign over you, or that one reign over you? Remember also that I am your bone and your flesh.” (Judg. ix. 2.) I say, do not listen to that voice; it is Rome. “Abide in the ship;” she may be tempest-tossed, driven on shore, become immovable, broken with the violence of the waves, but “there shall be no loss of life among you, *but of the ship.*”

“They which could swim, some on boards, and some on broken pieces of the ship. And so it came to pass, that they escaped all safe to land.”

I do not like to force my theory of historic and prophetic type, but I believe the beginning of the next chapter is a figurative foreshadow of what is still in the future. The wrecked mariners may be cast upon a foreign shore; Paul may gather a bundle of sticks, lay them on the fire to comfort the little band, because of the rain, and because of the cold; “a viper,” the Old Serpent himself in some bodily form, may come out of the heat, and fasten himself upon his hand; the heathen around may say, “No doubt this man is a murderer, whom, though he hath escaped the sea, yet

vengeance suffereth not to live." But Paul "shook off the *beast* into the fire, and felt no harm." Christian, little chosen band, learn to shake off "the *beast*" into the fire of genial, loving hearts; let him be consumed there; and you will feel no harm. Instead of the member swelling, or the body, St. Paul falling down dead suddenly; the alien, barbarous band to whom you are sent will change their minds, and say, He is a god. "I will appear unto thee, and deliver thee from the people, unto whom now I send thee." (Acts xxvi. 16—18.)

But, I would here again inquire, Where was the Jewish Church? Where the learned colleagues of Saul of Tarsus? Where the mad coadjutors with him in persecution, rage, and murder? Where the chief priests, from whom he had received his authority to imprison and condemn? Where were they during the transition of Saul into a St. Paul,—while he was translated from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of God? Or rather, I should ask, What satanic power could blind their eyes, and harden their hearts, so that they could not behold the truth of the Gospel scheme in him? The conversion of St. Paul was not a greater miracle of grace than the blindness of that Church was of judicial punishment. All her rebellion, idolatry, and sin of the past seemed almost trivial in comparison with the mad fury and diabolical proceedings of the crucifixion, and in her violent outrage against the Apostles after the ascension of Christ. "The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence." Then

the longsuffering of God had an end ; the blood of Christ closed the door of mercy against them, which He Himself had opened.

St. Paul's summing up of the whole subject in this book is very expressive. "Go unto this people, and say, Hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand ; and seeing ye shall see, and not perceive. Be it known therefore unto you, that the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and they will hear it." (Acts xxvii. 26—28.) The Jewish Church was then cut off from God through Christ, and consequently dead, as seen in Ezekiel xxxvii. and in Revelation xi. The translation of Saul could not enlighten her ; his conversion could not give her life.

Having noticed that conversion, I propose now to look at the nature of his great commission, from the whole tenour of his writings, to see what the character of it really was.

But, before leaving this book of the Acts of the Apostles, I cannot help noticing for a moment the human instrument who penned it. Of all the sacred writers there is not one who writes with more taste, elegance, and tenderness of spirit than St. Luke. He was a Syrian, a native of Antioch. Many suppose, with good reason, that he was one of St. Paul's first converts. (Acts xi. 26.) By referring to his Gospel, it will be seen that he was not a disciple of Christ, but that he had entered very fully, and studied very deeply, the subject-matter of His life. He says he wrote the things concerning Him as they had been delivered to the Church by

those who were eyewitnesses from the beginning. (Luke 1—3.) I do not think, as some do, that the four Gospels were written independent of each other;—that the Gospel of St. John was more so than the others, there can be no doubt; but the sacred Canon, as left to us, is an indenture of the Church by the Holy Ghost, compiled by a convocation. However, each one of the four writers may have given to his book his own originality, and John particularly, his distinct details.

The beginning of St. Luke's Gospel and the first verse of the Acts tell us both books were written to a friend, whom he called "most excellent Theophilus." The name means friend, or a lover of God, and as the name occurs nowhere else in Scripture, some have thought it might have been a designation of affection given to him by St. Luke; others, again, that it was the real name of a Jewish high-priest. Grotius thought he might be a magistrate of Achaia, converted by St. Luke. From the beginning of his addresses to him, and from the earnest desire that he should be rightly instructed, this last conjecture is more than probable. "That thou mightest know the certainty of those things, wherein thou hast been instructed." Be all this as it may, we rejoice over the two books given to the world in whatever way they may have originated. The full flow of truth, love, light, and life which pervade them tell us they originated in a pure heart and were addressed to an enlightened understanding and to a regenerated heart.

St. Paul called St. Luke "the beloved physician." (Col. iv. 14.) The name, as Lucas, means luminous ; and may we not well imagine how that trio of mind and spirit were "light in the Lord ?" How kindred were the minds of the two sacred writers, how congenial their spirits, how blended their cultivated tastes and pursuits, how united their labours, how entirely they were one in "the unity of the Spirit, in the bond of peace !" I can never contemplate the pleasing, elevated style of the refined mind of St. Luke, without thinking how the external grace and beauty of the Church will be increased when learning, taste, position, and original genius are all in love, and in right earnest really enlisted in her cause ; not as now, heartlessly, grudgingly, or as a secular profession ; but when a noble St. Paul, a beloved, luminous St. Luke, and an excellent Theophilus shall labour in her cause from choice ; when kings shall be her nursing fathers, and their queens her nursing mothers. "Thou art beautiful, O my love, as Tirzah, comely as Jerusalem." (Cant. vi. 4.)

CHAPTER XV.

THE RECONDITE AND CORROBORATIVE PHASE
REVELATION.

IN Revelation, the glorious system of the Gospel of Christ is presented to us in seven different phases. First, in the Jewish ritual and ceremonial laws; secondly, in the historical prophetic type; thirdly, in the Old Testament prophecies and writings; fourthly, in the four Gospels in its actual history; fifthly, in the Acts of the Apostles in its demonstrative history. "In demonstration of the Spirit and of power. That the faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God." Let those whose hands are weak, knees and minds are feeble, read it in this phase. So that glorious system is presented to us in the writings of St. Paul, in its recondite and corroborative phase; sixthly, in the Apocalyptic vision, in its entire, absolute and complete phase. That book is a lucid revelation of the sevenfold nature of the whole, of "the seven Spirits before the throne," One Eternal Spirit.

I do not say that Revelation has not more phases than seven. I could write a hundred volumes, and each

a different phase; each one distinct, and most important to ourselves, to compass for ourselves. A hundred volumes might be written upon the subject of sin alone. Whoever has or whoever can sound that depth? Justice in her demand for a substitution for sin did alone fathom it. That Substitute went down to its lowest depth, bottomed that pit, which must ever have been bottomless, ever extending, ever deepening. He became there a "sure Foundation," and hence His own sovereign exultation over hell, for sin is hell: "I have the keys of hell and death." (Rev. i. 18; ii. 8; xx. 1—3.)

And hence the manifold phases of Revelation. How can human intellect view, reach, compass, fathom them all? The Being of God! His attributes! what stupendous phases do they present to us? His precepts! who has ever considered this phase of Revelation?

How multifarious they are, how binding and authoritative they are! "Not one jot or one tittle shall pass from the law till all be fulfilled." The subject of creation, of grace, of love, not to the elect only, but to the world. "God so loved the world." And then the manifestation of God in Christ. What a phase! Go round it, examine it. God holy, lowly, meek, loving, consecrated, obedient, good, tender, unflinching in rebuke of sin, unearthly. And then, see again in Revelation, the view of God in heaven—that phase, the most sublime and glorious that the human eye can scan. Did I say the most? Oh, it is very difficult to say wherein He is the most glorious; but let us view Him one moment

from hence. "I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, *high and lifted up*." And mark the adoration of earth and heaven around that throne. "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of thy glory." (Isa. vi. 1—3.) "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come." (Rev. iv. 8.) What has inspired, elicited those lofty, deep, harmonious, celestial strains? Simply a knowledge of God as He is. He has wrought; His grace, and love, and holiness wrought till the lofty description is spontaneous, intelligent, and unbroken. "I praise, and extol, and honour the King of heaven, all whose works are truth, and his ways judgment." Oh, let every one take afresh the multifarious phases of Revelation, go round that orb of light, and examine for himself; the work will lead him on, till in spirit here, till in the Spirit hereafter, he finds himself joining in the adoration of the redeemed around that throne, *high and lifted up*. "I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me."

And again, there is the antipodes of these phases of Revelation, the being of Satan, the depths of Satan, the subtilty of Satan, the exaltation of Satan, the power of Satan, the promotion of Satan, the deadly poison of his nature, his furious, bloody, hellish struggle for victory, the long agony given to him in this world, his keeping, under the Conqueror Christ, and his destruction. "That through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is the devil. These are the phases of Revelation. I say again, Go round

that Orb of Light, "Lucifer," bringing light—the very nature of the devil subservient to the purpose of manifesting God; of causing for ever His nature holy, His throne high, and lifted up, to be seen, known, felt, loved, revered, adored, eternized, eternal. And how is this to be done? "Whom the Lord will consume with the spirit of his mouth." How is this to be done? By Revelation. "The Spirit of Truth" is the Spirit of the Incarnate God of the Word; "The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit. Ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you. Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth." This is how Satan is to be consumed, "With the spirit of his mouth." Then I say again, Go round the Orb of Light, bring down power from above, from the Incarnate God of the Word; pull down the strongholds of the devil—his strong fort, error; his hold, pride; his royal palace as prince of this world; pull down all these by spiritual weapons, that "God may be known in her palaces for a refuge," that the glory of His kingdom may be seen. "And shall destroy with the brightness of his coming." The world can never be saved, nor the devil destroyed, till that kingdom rises supreme in the heart of the Church, in the estimation of the world; this is the lever that must raise men, our fallen earth, to that throne high and lifted up. And hence that Divine rebuke, that deep appeal to a world spiritually dead, "If my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight." This world must be submerged, that that kingdom may rise. "Now is my kingdom not from hence." Let this rightful, sovereign, pathetic appeal sink

deep into our hearts. As Jesus trod our polluted earth, He said, "I seek not mine own glory:" and then He added, "If a man *keep my saying*, he shall never see death." This is the *goal* to be arrived at, the time when men shall not see death. "The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death." "That he might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil." Our earth is to wake up from the death of sin in her resurrection robes, in the robe of holiness, light, truth, justice, judgment; in the attributes of that throne high and lifted up. "They sang, as it were, a new song before the throne. These were redeemed from among men, the first fruits unto God and to the Lamb. And in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God." This is our earth, one again with heaven, that throne high, and lifted up, set up upon our earth; for the first verse says, "Lo, a Lamb stood on the Mount Zion." (Rev. xiv.) O God, raise us by thy grace, by the life of thine own word to "a throne, high and lifted up."

But we must descend from these realms of light and glory as the disciples did from the Mount of Transfiguration. A cloud seems to overshadow us as we do so, even as it did them; but the subject takes us back again so authoritatively to the nature of St. Paul's great commission, to his writings; that is, to the recondite, corroborative phase of Revelation, that I would say, as we come down from the mountain, let us only listen more attentively and more solemnly to the voice out of the cloud, "This is my beloved Son; hear him."

It must strike every reflective mind that these many and distinct institutions of the Church by God Himself are a matter of very solemn importance both to the minister and to the hearer: it is the voice of God in Christ, "Hear him." We have seen the Jewish Church instituted by God; it is one of the most remarkable phases and phenomena of Revelation; the glorious system of the Gospel of Christ is lucidly and distinctly seen from hence. We have seen the institution of the Christian Church by God in Christ before the crucifixion, after the resurrection, and here again in the ordination and anointing of St. Paul. I say, for God in Christ to descend from heaven so many times to do this, tells us much is at stake; great and solemn things are involved. If we examine a little the writings of the "chosen vessel," the importance of his great commission will be evidenced.

In 1 Cor. iv. 1, it is written, "Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God."

The precise meaning of the word mystery is, something which we do not know by instinct or reason, but which is now revealed to us by the Spirit of God. Then what is this something? We know that we are created, that we exist, and that we die; but this something, these mysteries, are more than this. The Spirit tells us that God exists throughout all generations. Oh, that Alpha and Omega! who can track His years? Who can conceive of an Intelligence unwaning, unending, invisible, immaterial? God passes by, He

is in us, and about us ; but unless He reveal Himself by His Spirit, we know Him not. That Spirit, too, reveals the antagonistic spirit, Satan, a being stretching through time (Rev. xiii.), and, therefore, more God's implacable enemy than man's. I will give you the meaning of this word, implacable, as given by lexicographers, and then, perhaps, we shall be the better prepared to go forward with a right understanding of St. Paul's mission :—"Implacable, not to be appeased or made peaceful : constant in enmity : not to be subdued. Inexorable, unappeasable, irreconcilable, unrelenting, relentless, malicious, stubborn." This is the devil : beware!

Then, let us, first, look for a moment at this mystery. The Apostle said, "The mystery of iniquity doth already work." (2 Thess. ii. 7.) He was a minister of Christ, and a steward of the mysteries of God. We do not once find the word *Mystery* in the Old Testament ; still all the types, and figures, and prophecies concerning the Messiah were mysteries, not such as could not be understood by the teaching of the Spirit, because Christ said, "Abraham saw his day" (John viii. 56) ; but they were only indistinctly seen, because the great Teacher was resisted,—“I have multiplied visions, and used similitudes, by the ministry of the prophets.” (Hosea xii. 10.) “With Moses will I speak mouth to mouth, even apparently, and not in dark speeches ; and the similitude of the Lord shall he behold.” (Num. xii. 8.) I think I see God as much in Revelation as I shall ever see Him in heaven ; and I feel His presence

here as certainly, if not as perfectly, as I shall there. The Messiah came, the dark speeches and similitudes concerning Him remain to tell us, that it was the mind of man that was dark, and not the mind of the Spirit,—“Having the understanding darkened.” Now, although the Old Covenant is vanished away, because fulfilled, we still find mysteries proclaimed by the same Messiah who had been the centre of all mystery,—“Unto you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God: but unto them that are without, all things are done in parables: that seeing they may see, and not perceive; and hearing they may hear, and not understand; lest at any time they should be converted, and sins should be forgiven them. And he said unto them, Know ye not this parable? and how then will ye know all parables? The sower soweth the word.” (Mark iv. 11—13.) Here is mystery, and the great commission of the Church is set forth in five words,—“The sower soweth the word;” for, as it is in the parallel passage in St. Luke viii. 11, “The seed is the word of God.” St. Peter, remembering the words of his Divine Master, called it “the incorruptible seed, which liveth,” and says, “being born again” of it. And so St. Paul wrote,—“The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds; casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.” (2 Cor. x. 4—5.) It will ever be a miserable

failure when we undertake to fight with carnal weapons,—“Though we walk in the flesh we do not war after the flesh.” The priesthood under the typical dispensation might head armies, blow the trumpet of alarm, typical of spiritual things; but not under the Christian dispensation; they are now to be spiritually employed,—“Let him that is taught in the word communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things. Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man *soweth*, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting. And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.” (Gal. vi. 6—9.) Our life here is just the beginning of what it will be everlastingly. If we try to fight the Lord’s battle with carnal weapons, and sow to the flesh, we shall surely fail; but spiritual might, calm, holy, stedfast, reliant faith will always conquer,—“Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong.” (1 Cor. xvi. 13.) “Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of *his knowledge* by us in every place. For we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish. For we are not as many, which corrupt the word of God: but as of sincerity, in the sight of God speak we in Christ.” (2 Cor. ii. 14—17.) The 1 Cor., second and third chapters, are deep upon the nature of the ministry. How can I extract from

them? how can I handle them?—"My speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God. We speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory." And then the Apostle goes on to say,—“God hath revealed all things unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. The things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God.” His whole teaching is so fraught with light and life, I cannot forbear extracting it:—"We have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." Again,—“The chosen vessel,” full of the Holy Ghost, felt his difficulty, and went on to say,—“I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able.” And he says again, Heb. v. 14,—“Strong meat belongeth unto them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.”

“Therefore, leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection.”

This strong meat takes us again to the mysteries of the kingdom of God, so faithfully preached to the world while He was incarnate in the flesh. The passage in St. Mark may read strange to those who have not a comprehensive view of Scripture. We must remember that Christ spake the parable of the sower to His disciples, that then the Jewish Church was expelled for unfaithfulness. She not only entered not in herself, but those who would have entered in she hindered; her stewardship was taken from her; the keys of the kingdom of God were taken from her, and given to the Apostolic Church; judicial blindness and death had then overtaken her. (Luke xv. 1, 2, 3—23; Ezek. xxxvii.; Rev. xi.) She was dead to God, cut off from His service; the Holy Ghost, the Great Teacher, who could alone teach by them, was extinct in them; they had committed the sin against the Holy Ghost, utterly resisted, quenched the Spirit, which could not be forgiven. (Matt. xii. 31—33.) “If any man see his brother sin a sin which is not unto death, he shall ask, and he shall *give him life* for them that sin not unto death. There is a sin unto death: I do not say that he shall pray for it.” (1 John v. 16.)

There is life in this world as well as in heaven, and there is death in this world as well as in the grave. To this state the Jewish Church had come (Rev. xi. 8); and thus it was Christ said, “Unto you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God: but unto them that are *without*.” (See the

meaning of without, in Rev. xxii. 15.) "All things are done in parables : that seeing they may see, and not perceive ; and hearing they may hear, and not understand ; lest at any time they should be converted, and their sins should be forgiven them." And His further teaching, that the disciples should communicate the light of their knowledge, evidences that this was His meaning. "Unto you that hear shall more be given." (Mark iv. 21—25.) To hear and to obey the voice of God, as He teaches by experience, and by the emphatic declaration of His Word, is life.

Do we understand now, what Christ meant by "Write the mystery of the seven stars" (Rev. i. 20)—the life and death of the seven bodies of the Church's history ? (Luke vi. 28, 29.) "To be spiritually minded is life ; to be carnally minded is death." How few are there upon this earthly ball who are not dead ! Are we now, as a nation, a Church, as a body, carnal or spiritual ? Which preponderates, life or death ? Who dwells in the majority, God or the Evil Spirit ? Reduce the question to the priesthood,—who preponderates in the body, the Holy Ghost or the "carnal mind ?" These are solemn questions. "Be not deceived ; God is not mocked : or whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to the flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption ; but he that soweth to the Spirit, shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting." (Gal. vi. 6—8.) "To be carnally minded *is death.*"

This brings us again to St. Paul's great commission : "stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful ;" faithful to

propound really, clearly, and earnestly, "the mystery of God," and "the mystery of iniquity." Let us look again, for a moment, at the last of these as taught by Him, and then at the first, and ask that the one may be consumed by the brightness of the other. "Whom the Lord shall consume by the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming."

What were the revelations of good and evil, of spiritual warfare, of the hidden future made to St. Paul, we do not know; but he opens that remarkable chapter (2 Cor. xii.) with the words, "I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord." By whom, or through whom, these were made to him we do not know; the whole is so worded as to lead us to suppose they were made to him through another person, and that it was not he himself who was caught up to the third heaven. It was about the year 52 when St. Paul preached at Corinth, and these epistles to the Corinthians were written afterwards; therefore, I think it possible he may have met St. John at Ephesus, after his return from Patmos, and that he received from him these revelations, perhaps from his mouth, or perhaps from a confidential reading of the revelation given to John. Be this as it may, it is evident his mind had been very deeply impressed by a solemn consciousness, if not an open vision of unseen realities: "How that he was caught up into Paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for man to utter." And if we turn to his epistles to the Thessalonians (which were written about the same time, in the year 53) we find in them, as it were, a transcript from

the Revelation, and it seems to explain the singularly-worded chapter in Corinthians. "Of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you. For yourselves know perfectly, that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night." I think this "day of the Lord," here refers to the coming of Christ, at death, to every individual being of the human family. "Yourselves know perfectly." To every generation Christ comes in judgment, and that coming in individual history is equivalent to His visible appearance. "When they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape." And if we turn to the second chapter of the second epistle, it seems but a fuller revelation of Revelation vi. 7, 18. Oh, the mystery of iniquity is an awful mystery! The carnally-minded and the dead may tell me we have nothing to do with the times and the seasons, but I will not listen to them; the very faith and life of the Church are involved in the question; it was that Satanic spell of unbelief which lulled to sleep the Jewish Church till the Messiah came. "We speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory: which none of the princes of this world knew; for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory." (1 Cor. ii. 7, 8.) Let us look at the mysteries of revelation, "lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares."

It is impossible to read this chapter in Thessalonians

without knowing that it is a prophecy of the personal exhibition of Satan in our world; the prophecies of the ancient prophets, of Christ, of St. John, all lead on,—reach onward to that manifestation. Would to God I were wrong! for truly I can say with St. Paul, “I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost, that I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart. For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh.” To be forewarned is to be forearmed; better to be armed and no battle, than to have to meet the enemy unarmed, unprepared. The Apostle opens the chapter by calling upon the Church to be armed, to be ready. “That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand.” This day of Christ may refer to the destruction of Jerusalem, to the coming of Christ then in judgment, for we find that event, and this revelation of the man of sin, foretold by Himself, and connected in the same way as they are by St. Paul. (Matt. xxiv.; Luke xxi. 20, 31, 32, 34.) “All these are the *beginning* of sorrows.” If the mind and spirit remain in faith and purpose unshaken, there will be victory, glory will break forth beyond conflict, but without these nothing worthy will be effected; to be shaken will be to prolong conflict, to increase confusion; but to be believing, holy, and calm, will be victory. Then the Apostle goes on to say that the final day of Christ cannot come till that man of sin, the son of perdition, be revealed. The

role relation is appalling. Read it for yourselves. I cannot tract it; it is fraught with darkness, death, and hell, and ould, therefore, be literally received, appalling as it is. ppositors may tell us we do not know who, or what is tended by this record of the revelation of the man of sin; it let us glance back again at the sin of incredulity of the ws, of their indifference to the writings of their prophets. O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets ve spoken." And I can never lose the sound of another ice of the Spirit of Christ: "Write the mystery of the ven stars."

But let us turn to the Epistle to the Ephesians, to the city ere St. Paul preached, and where St. John lived before, d after, his exile in Patmos. The very spirituality and olimity of "visions and revelations of the Lord" seem to vade the whole. "Having made known unto us the stery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he h purposed in himself: that in the *dispensation of the ness of times* he might gather together in one all things in rist, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth, n in him." (Eph. i. 9, 10.) The third chapter is very narkable, and, as is the whole epistle, full of pathos, vency, holiness, and affection. "Ye have heard of the pensation of the grace of God which is given to me to you- rd: how that by revelation he made known unto me the ystery; (as I wrote afore in few words, whereby, when ye ad, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of rist)." And then, in the sixth chapter, he sets forth the

spiritual warfare in which we are engaged in the most strong, emphatic language which can be employed. "Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; and your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; *above all*, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the *fiery darts* of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God: praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all *perseverance* and supplication for all saints." Is not this being armed to the teeth? spiritually and always armed against a great enemy? It is most striking and important language, which perhaps will never be appreciated till the Christian Church has entered still more deeply into the horror of warfare, till the man of sin has been revealed. But, oh may it serve her in the conflict!

To deny this doctrine of the devil is as much to deny Christ as to deny the doctrine of the Atonement; because, but for the one, the other would not have been required.

“You hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience.” Eph. ii. 1, 2.) Life wrestling with, and overcoming death must be conflict.

St. Paul’s Epistle to the Philippians was also written after reaching at Philippi, about the year 52. It is full of the most affectionate, earnest expressions, and seems to take in that grand recovery so illimitably set forth by St. John, “That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things”—I think creatures would be better substituted here—“in heaven, and things in earth, and things *under the earth*.” Where is this? Hell, it may be.

As I have said before, whether these visions and revelations were made directly to St. Paul, or to him by St. John, it is not possible to say, although the reading of the narrative rather favours the last supposition. “I knew a man *in Christ* about fourteen years ago.” (2 Cor. xii. 2.) “In Christ” may refer to St. John’s words, “I was in the Spirit.” (Rev. 10.) “How that he was caught up into paradise”—this may have the same meaning—“and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter”—this may refer to the things revealed to John by the voices of the seven thunders; “Seal up those things which the seven thunders uttered, and write them not.” (Rev. x. 4.) Perhaps “those things” pertained to the “things *under the earth*.” But be all this as it may, it is quite clear St. Paul had received supernatural

revelations of spiritual things, and that they very deeply impressed his mind with the solemn importance of his great commission, and enabled him to set forth so vividly invisible powers. Turn again for a moment to the subject of sin, as set forth by him.

"The scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe." (Gal. iii. 22.) "Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like." (Gal. v. 19—21.) "You being dead in your sins." (Col. ii. 13.) "Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity." "For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, truce-breakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof; from such turn away." (2 Tim. iii. 2—4.) "Neither give place to the devil." Do we now understand one of the mysteries of St. Paul's ministry—"the mystery of iniquity"—without at all making mention of the distinct MYSTERY, BABYLON?

We have now come to another mystery, "the mystery of God." As I have said, the mysteries of the Jewish ritual as a service had passed away; some of them had met with their

fulfilment in Christ ; His stupendous work was then done, that which had occupied the Eternal mind from a past eternity was then finished. "It is finished." Oh, what a volume of life and glory did that little epitome contain, "It is finished!" sin legally taken away, swept away, the radical cause uprooted, hell bottomed, principalities and powers under the sceptre and command of the Conqueror, Christ. The curse of sin had been borne, "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us." (Gal. iii. 13.) "Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died." (Rom. viii. 33—34.) Then the Apostle as it were breaks forth into a rhapsody of triumph, and says, "Yea, rather that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us." And his triumphant spirit rose higher and higher, still to swell the strain, till he attained to a certainty, to a then present possession of life, and glory in Christ Jesus. Yes, because he knew that Christ was then the risen, glorified representative of all material creation. "There is one God, and one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus; who gave himself a ransom for *all*, to be testified in due time. Whereunto I am ordained a preacher, and an Apostle." (1 Tim. ii. 4—6.) "It is finished." Oh, amazing thought, the work of the Redeemer of the world was then in the past! The risen Head of the Church in glory! Was all then done? Was then, preaching Christ in the abstract, our righteousness, our ransom price and atoning sacrifice, all that remained to be done? No, still there were mysteries. "Write, the mystery of the seven

stars." The soul must receive Christ, be everlastingly one in Him, as well as have knowledge of Him. "This is a great mystery" (Eph. v. 32), the point to come to, the substance of St. Paul's great commission. Without union with Christ through the Spirit, His work would have been in vain. "Great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit." (1 Tim. iii. 16.) The Spirit casting out the devil from a man's heart, is mystery. "The Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil." (1 John iii. 8.) By His Omnipotent Spirit brought home to us, this mystery did not pass away, and hence "the seven spirits before the throne" (Rev. i. 4, 16—20; iv. 5; ii. 1; iii. 1), typified in the tabernacle, and in the temple. That Spirit is to work till *all* be again embosomed in the kingdom of God, which is Spirit. "I knew a man in Christ." "I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." Knowledge and life must go hand in hand; or rather, the one springs up out of the other, "born of water and of the Spirit," of water first, and sealed with that holy Spirit of promise when we believe. (Eph. i. 13.) The mystery of the Spirit through Christ is a great mystery, a revelation which none can receive but by the Spirit, by receiving the Spirit. "The *invisible* things of him from the creation of the world are *clearly seen*, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead." (Rev. ii. 17.) "Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble." (James ii. 19, 20.) "This is the work of

hat ye believe on him whom he hath sent." (John vi. "If ye believe in God, believe also in me." And hence doctrine of life, of resurrection life from the death of rough Christ, so lucidly set forth, and corroborated by asel of life chosen to bear His name before the Gentiles. ording to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which mmitted to my trust. And I thank Christ Jesus, our who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, g me into the ministry; who was before a blasphemer, persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy, e I did it ignorantly in unbelief. And the grace of ord was exceeding abundant with faith and love which hrist Jesus. This is a faithful saying, and worthy of eptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save ; of whom I am chief. Howbeit for this cause I ed mercy, that in *me first* Jesus Christ might show ll long-suffering, *for a pattern* to them which should er believe on him *to life* everlasting." (1 Tim. i. 3.)

Paul declared the Gospel of Christ to be a Mystery, e deep, weighty matter thereof intrusted to him deeply ed his mind. "Now to him that is of power to sta- ou according to my Gospel, and the preaching of Jesus according to the revelation of the mystery, which was xret since the world began, but now is made manifest." xvi. 25.) "The mystery which hath been hid from id from generations, but now is made manifest to his

saints: to whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory." (Col. i. 25, 26.) And we cannot read through his writings without tracing a sense of his heavy responsibility to be one feature of them. He pressed home the doctrines of life committed to him with earnestness and affection. See this throughout the first chapter of Galatians. "Paul, an apostle (not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised him from the dead)."

"All things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; to wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the ministry of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God." (2 Cor. v. 18—20.) How grand and lofty the conception! how sublime the truth! God in Christ—a minister of forgiveness and of reconciliation. And the Apostle found himself inducted into office by Him, the successor of Him, and sustained therein by Him, by the Spirit given to abide with the Church for ever. "Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus." (Heb. iii. 1.) St. Paul rejoiced in the new economy of the Spirit under which he was called to labour. 2 Cor. iii. is lucid upon the subject. "Our

sufficiency is of God ; who also hath made us able ministers of the new covenant, not of the letter, but of the Spirit : for the letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life." Oh, who can rightly estimate that new economy of the Spirit, the promise of the Father ! the vital power of that new covenant ! We see God in Christ, but of the ether ocean of immaterial nature, who can judge ? And thus the Apostle could say of his converts, " Ye are our epistle, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God."

The doctrine of Christ, the atonement, justification by faith in Him, are the roots of his writings ; but " the law of the Spirit of life " springs up, grows out of them ; the Orb and its light, the Fountain, and its living water, the Tree of Life, and its heavenly fruits, are the sure ground of his preaching ; sanctification and holy life are the results, and thus it was he said, " Leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection." The natural disposition of the Church is to swerve into a state of ease, trifling, indifference, self-seeking, temporal glory, into Rome, into a human economy. This state caused the Flood and the expulsion of the Jewish Church. It has been said to me, the Church of Rome is not Antichrist, because she does not deny the Father and the Son. " In works they deny God." The Apostle could say, " Henceforth know we no man after the flesh : yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more." And Christ : " It is the Spirit that quickeneth ; the flesh profiteth nothing." And so in our

own Church, when we see a system of external forms, fasting, an observance of days, an adoration of Christ in the flesh, with a blind belief in sacraments and in rites, we always find an utter absence of that glorious ministration of the Spirit which the Apostle saw, so far to exceed in glory. And hence his exclamation of surprise, and holy rebuke to his Galatian converts, "O foolish Galatians." "Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?" (Gal. iii. 1, 3.) "The kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." (Rom. xiv. 17.)

He was truly an able minister of the Spirit; and thus it was that his own mind and spirit passed from light to light, from truth to truth, till he summed up his own experience of "light in the Lord," in the exclamation, "We all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord." And then he summed up this lucid explanation of the nature of his ministry by the exultation, "Therefore seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not." (2 Cor. iv. 1.)

Do we now understand the Apostle's incomparable expression, "The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death?" (Rom. viii. 2.) Mark well the grand and noble proportions of that verse, the perfect symmetry of the truth, and of the Gospel contained in it. Christ the Root, the Author of the Spirit of Life. The

ner by it, through Him made free from the law of sin and death; that is, the nature of the wicked one in him uprooted, reached as an inherent quality, set free. In this life, always dying, it is true, but the root shaken, withering, falling. Now then it is no more *I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me*. For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: but I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" And we mark "the Deliverer." "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin." (Rom. vii.) And so the substance of this his first Epistle is justification by faith in Christ, but the doctrine or "the law of the Spirit of life," grows out of it. "Declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the *Spirit* of holiness by the resurrection from the dead." (Rom. i. 4.) He is not here speaking of the resurrection of the body from the dead, but of life from the death of sin. His strong, penetrating mind worked its way from one doctrine to another, the one as it grew growing out of the other. "What the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, condemned sin in the flesh. That the *righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us*, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." (Rom.

viii. 4.) "Whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son."

And so again, while the radical doctrine is dominant in his mind, "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died,"—that root of the doctrine of Christ carries him away to the risen Intercessor, to the Author of life before the throne, who is shedding down that life upon His people, that they may be holy as He is holy,— "Yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us." "Not the hearers of the law shall be just before God, but the *doers* of the law shall be justified."

St. Paul wrote the Epistle to the Hebrews to his own people. It is a very deep, spiritual disquisition to set forth to them the inferiority of the ministration of the Jewish priesthood, in comparison with the ministration of the Spirit; and he opens the subject by comparing the two orders. The risen and ascended Sacrifice, the Christ, the Author of life, "the King of saints," the spiritual Head, the High Priest of the order of the Spirit, who in His vitality and power vastly preponderated in His mind over against the Levitical priesthood. Let us look for a moment at the argument, as we find it in this Epistle. He said, the Son, the heir of all things, had then taken the Headship of all things, was upholding all things by the Word of His power,

having purged our sins, and sat down on the right hand of the majesty on high. Mark well the remarkable expression : The Father saith "unto the Son, Thy throne, *O God*, is for ever and ever." (Heb. i. 8.) What a vital, spiritual Fountain is in a moment set at the head of His order ! Then God's angels or ministers—sent ones—became duplex beings, more spiritual than they ever had been. "Who maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire." (Heb. i. 7.) Here is the Eternal Spirit in His sent ones, which the seven lamps in the tabernacle and in the temple represented ; and which is seen in the vision of St. John, the light and life of the Church. (Rev. i. 4 ; ii. 1 ; iii. 1 ; iv. 5.) And here, too, is the fire of the Word, so set forth throughout Scripture, but more plainly so in the tenth of Ezekiel. And then the Apostle goes on to speak of the rest of faith. (Chaps. iii., iv., v.) The labourer is not to expect miracles ; God does not want pining, whining, fretful ministers, seeking temporal glory, but those who, walking by faith, can lead on His people from knowledge to knowledge, from life to life, from victory to victory, from glory to glory. "Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief." (Heb. iv. 11.) After what example of unbelief ? Of the Church in the ages before. (Heb. iii. 16, 17, 19.) "Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it. The word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it. For

we which have believed *do enter into rest*. For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his." (Heb. iv.) We see, then, that through faith there is a rest for the Church, even in this world. Neither the Antediluvian or Christian Church obtained it; but the Apostle said to his new order, "Let us labour, lest we fall after the same example of unbelief." How is this rest of faith to be obtained by the Church on earth? The Apostle remembered again the words of David, "Who maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire;" and then his mind breaks forth into an exclamation, declaring the practical part of his ministry, wherein was contained the invisible power. "The word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart." (Heb. iv. 12.) Oh, ministers of Christ, look at this blessed Word endued with life, at yourselves endued with life (1 Cor. iii. 16), and by faith you will obtain the rest of faith. The Apostle, as it were, ill-satisfied with himself, made this the prelude only to his great subject, and went on to establish the superiority of his order upon the foundation of the doctrines of Christ; and the doctrine of the Atonement became the source from whence he drew his vital results, his high theory of practical theology; just as we have seen, in his Epistle to the Romans, the doctrine of life to rise upon, or to issue from, the doctrine of justification by Faith in

st. "Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many."
 ix. 28.) "This man, after he had offered one sacrifice
 ns, *for ever* sat down on the right hand of God." (Heb.
 2.) "Without shedding of blood is no remission."
 ix. 22.) Christ was everywhere prophesied of as
 het, Priest, and King, and He was consecrated to the
 office of the priesthood (Luke ii. 23); but, the Apostle
 as, He could not have been a priest if He had had no
 ice to offer. "Wherefore it is of necessity that this
 have somewhat also to offer." (Heb. viii. 3.) And
 he says, "Christ through the eternal Spirit *offered him-*
without spot to God." (Heb. ix. 14.) And how beautiful
 ervice of the future which rose up in his mind from this
 doctrine, "*Therefore* present your bodies a living sacri-
 ioly, acceptable unto God." (Heb. xii. 1.)
 e doctrine of the Eternal Priesthood of Christ grows out
 e doctrine of the Atonement; and again, the doctrine of
 pirit out of the doctrine of the Eternal Priesthood; and
 doctrine of life is the main argument throughout the
 nder of the Epistle; and the Apostle drew from it con-
 e and strength for his great work. "Seeing then that
 ve a great High Priest, that is passed into the heavens,
 the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession." (Heb.
) "After the similitude of Melchisedec there ariseth
 er priest, who is made, not after the law of a carnal
 andment, but after the power of an endless life." (Heb.
 6.) Oh, what a volume of life seems to flow from the

we which have believed *do enter into rest*. For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his." (Heb. iv.) We see, then, that through faith there is a rest for the Church, even in this world. Neither the Antediluvian or Christian Church obtained it; but the Apostle said to his new order, "Let us labour, lest we fall after the same example of unbelief." How is this rest of faith to be obtained by the Church on earth? The Apostle remembered again the words of David, "Who maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire;" and then his mind breaks forth into an exclamation, declaring the practical part of his ministry, wherein was contained the invisible power. "The word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." (Heb. iv. 12.) Oh, ministers of Christ, look at this blessed Word endued with life, at yourselves endued with life (1 Cor. iii. 16), and by faith you will obtain the rest of faith. The Apostle, as it were, ill-satisfied with himself, made this the prelude only to his great subject, and went on to establish the superiority of his order upon the foundation of the doctrines of Christ; and the doctrine of the Atonement became the source from whence he drew his vital results, his high theory of practical theology; just as we have seen, in his Epistle to the Romans, the doctrine of life to rise upon, or to issue from, the doctrine of justification by Faith in

Christ. "Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many." (Heb. ix. 28.) "This man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins, *for ever* sat down on the right hand of God." (Heb. x. 12.) "Without shedding of blood is no remission." (Heb. ix. 22.) Christ was everywhere prophesied of as Prophet, Priest, and King, and He was consecrated to the holy office of the priesthood (Luke ii. 23); but, the Apostle argues, He could not have been a priest if He had had no sacrifice to offer. "Wherefore it is of necessity that this man have somewhat also to offer." (Heb. viii. 3.) And then he says, "Christ through the eternal Spirit *offered himself* without spot to God." (Heb. ix. 14.) And how beautiful the service of the future which rose up in his mind from this vital doctrine, "*Therefore* present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God." (Heb. xii. 1.)

The doctrine of the Eternal Priesthood of Christ grows out of the doctrine of the Atonement; and again, the doctrine of the Spirit out of the doctrine of the Eternal Priesthood; and this doctrine of life is the main argument throughout the remainder of the Epistle; and the Apostle drew from it confidence and strength for his great work. "Seeing then that we have a great High Priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession." (Heb. i. 14.) "After the similitude of Melchisedec there ariseth another priest, who is made, not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life." (Heb. vii. 16.) Oh, what a volume of life seems to flow from the

I said vital, because these doctrines of life, built upon redemption's base, tell us whence that vitality. "The law is spiritual;" Christ made it so: He brought the Eternal Spirit into the letter of the law, and the Eternal Spirit into the heart of man to receive, to love, and to do that law. All the ancient prophets prophesied of that great spiritual transition; and the sublime sermon of the God-man upon the Holy Mount, was the fulfilment of them all. "The priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law." Obedience in spirit from likeness to God, and from pure love to Him; the law of love and benevolence to our neighbour reigning in the heart, is the spiritual law of Christ. "Our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost." (1 Thess. i. 5.)

"We will walk in his paths, for out of Zion shall go forth the law." "The Lord is well pleased for his righteousness' sake; he will magnify the law, and make it honourable." (Isa. ii. 3; xlii. 20; Micah iv. 2.) "A law shall proceed from me." (Isa. li. 4; Ps. cv. 8—10; Jer. xxxi. 31—33; Ezek. xvi. 60; xxxvi. 26, 27.) "Sanctify the Lord of hosts himself. He shall be for a sanctuary. Seal the law." (Isa. viii. 13, 14, 16; Heb. viii. 1, 2.) When we are in that "sanctuary," our spirits one in the body of Christ, we shall be spiritual, and we shall fulfil the law of His Spirit. He Himself summed up this foreshadow of a spiritualized law in a few words: "It is written in the prophets, They shall be all taught of God." (John vi. 45.)

the grand doctrine of the Eternal Priesthood of Christ, and the power through Him, were the secret of the Apostle's endurance, and waiting for success in His ministry : " thus hold fast the profession of our faith without ceasing ; for he is faithful that promised." And from hence that stupendous dissertation upon the subject of Faith, is unequalled in any other page of Revelation, Heb. xi. ; in its contexts, it is a study for a life ; and such a sure help for the soul to go forward upon, that we pass on from the temporal to things eternal. The present ceases to occupy any place in our minds. Patience has done her perfect work and we find ourselves standing in the glorious array of warriors, " who through faith can subdue kingdoms, work righteousness, obtain promises, stop the mouths of lions ; withstand the violence of fire, escape the edge of the sword, out of weakness be made strong, wax valiant in fight, turn to the armies of the aliens." Yes, I say, as the Apostle uses on, we can do all this, and more,—we can declare our faith, not to a world dead in sin, but to a world now alive and dead in sin, that we are strangers and pilgrims on the earth and desire a heavenly country.

I may not mar that effusion of the Eternal Spirit by dwelling on it, still I may glance for a moment at the prelude to it. We are made a gazing-stock both by reproaches and afflictions. Do not away, therefore, your confidence, which hath great promise of reward. For ye have need of patience, that, when ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the

enemies of the cross of Christ speak of the doctrines of the Gospel as subversive of good works and a holy life, it is because they do not know "the law of life," of His kingdom; His Gospel without this would, indeed, be an empty name, "Christ after the flesh." Just that which we see Rome to be, a system in word and in externalisms, and not in the life and power of the Holy Ghost. "We all with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." (2 Cor. iii. 18.) The Apostle even goes further than this,— "That ye might be filled with all the fulness of God." (Eph. iii. 19.) As I have said, herein is the excellency of the scheme of redemption; that its provision for the sanctification of the Church is as *Divine*, as ample, and as complete, as redemption is absolute.

It is the heavenly spirit of the Apostolic Church that so recommends the doctrine of Christ to our hearts. "The law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus" is a law of spiritually instinctive charity, unity, harmony, and lowliness. In the kingdom of God there is an instinctive morality, which carries us beyond the severe justice of the letter of the law, even as mercy rejoiceth against judgment. That law is, too, one of reconciliation to God, of union with Him, and of consecration to His service: it is one of a perfect rule of life, of which He who was the embodiment of law and Gospel was our example. As I have shown you this in His own ministry and life, so I would say, look at it again in the early Church.

"Having, therefore, these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God." (2 Cor. vii. 1.) "Distributing to the necessity of saints ; given to hospitality. Bless them which persecute you : bless, and curse not. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good." (Rom. xii.) "Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing ; but the *keeping* of the commandments of God." (1 Cor. vii. 19.) "Wherefore, my dearly beloved, flee from idolatry." (x. 14.) "I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, with all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love ; endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." I would here say, with the Apostle, "Christian, walk worthy of the vocation wherewith you are called ;" from the first moment your eyes are open to the things of the Gospel of Christ, from the *very first* step you take in the Christian course, walk warily, not only purely, but with wise foresight. "Abstain from every appearance of evil," because the devil has set gins and snares in your path ; he will not suffer you to go on long without deadly assault, without endeavouring to draw you into his snares by subtle devices. Those who neither love or care for the cause of Christ, but for their own aggrandizement and self-glorification, will begin to pick holes in your walk. You will have these enemies without, and the devil will stir up enemies within, and you will be hard put to it. You

will not only be charged with your own sins, but with the sins of all who belong to you. Oh, I say, walk warily, or, as the Apostle exhorts, "Worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called." "Who is he that will harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good?"

"There is one body and one spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all. Be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you." (Eph. iv.) "Above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness. And let the peace of God rule in your hearts." (Col. iii. 14.) "See that none render evil for evil unto any man; but ever follow that which is good. Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you."

And, then, mark again, the godly benedictions and salutations of that early Church:—"Greet one another with an holy kiss. All the saints salute you." (2 Cor. xiii. 11, 12.) "Salute every saint in Christ Jesus. The brethren which are with me greet you." (Phil. iv. 21.) "Greet all the brethren with an holy kiss." (1 Thess. v. 26.) "Salute one another with an holy kiss." I often wonder that these salutations have not been adopted in modern correspondence. How would the tone and spirit of them shame the wilful waste of time and thought expended upon the volumes of communications under our present postal regulations. Such salutations and

benedictions of epistles seem calculated to raise the tone of communities, to unite all in the bond of "the God of love and peace."

Oh! I love to remain amongst these ruins, yet still heavenly breathings, of the Apostolic Church. We seem to catch the celestial breezes as they floated from the Pentecostal morn; or, "The sweet influences of the Pleiades," as the soft zephyr swept our world; "When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy." The words of St. Peter explain to us this "Mystery of godliness." "Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the Divine nature." "Born of God," let this "law of life" reign in us, for it is the Spirit with these holy fruits which holds us willing converts to "The Apostles' doctrine," as we read from the beginning of the book of their Acts to the end of all their Epistles.

I would say, let this be for ever a received axiom in the Church, that when our course is difficult, when Satan, by his devices, has caused tumult within, and conflicting elements to rage around, then we may break his spell, and defy his power, by bowing low before "the Prince of Peace," by learning meekness of Him, and by rearing, in spirit and in truth, His standard before the world, and before all who oppose us—the spirit of the Apostolic Church; for that standard was "The Spirit of God."

How precious in the sight of God were those temples of

the Holy Ghost ; how precious their souls to Him,—“Deliver such a one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.” (1 Cor. v. 5.) “If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy.” (iii. 17.) We have seen what tremendous blows were inflicted upon David, Eli, Ananias, and Sapphira, for sinning against the Holy Ghost,—“Thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God.” It was a great sin to keep “back part of the price.” This certain part laid at the Apostles’ feet was but a sorry offering for the “Great grace that was upon them all.”

The word sacrament means oath ; and it is a most solemn thing to enter into covenant engagement with God. As oft as “the temple of the Holy Ghost” kneels at the altar of the true tabernacle, he should there, not only join in commemoration, and promise allegiance, but he should reciprocate the oath of the covenant by the faithful consecration of himself and all his substance to the service of God. Our heart’s best affections, a spiritual service, and a living sacrifice, are what God requires of us.

Men will be judged at the last day by the Gospel of Christ, and not by the letter of the law. “He that believeth not shall be damned.” The ceremonial law was but a type of the holiness of the Gospel of Christ. “The letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life.” Judgment will proceed by the jurisdiction of His kingdom. “God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel.” (Rom. ii.

16.) It is true the Apostle has said again, "We must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad;" but the things done in the body will only evidence the nature of the being judged, whether he was carnal or spiritual; so that upon whatever ground judgment proceeds, the cause of the verdict will remain the same. The fruits of the Spirit will alone be accepted of God, and not the works of the flesh. "Lord, in thy name we have done many wonderful works." "I never knew you, depart from me." "They that are in the flesh cannot please God." This doctrine of the Spirit is a mighty doctrine; a most important phase of Revelation; the light of the Sun of Righteousness; the life of "The Lord of life;" the life that saves from death.

Christian Church, your strength, your light, your life is God. Go forward till faith be lost in full fruition, till mystery for ever give place to the knowledge of the Lord. "In the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished, as he hath declared to his servants the prophets." (Rev. x. 7.) "The glory of this latter house shall be greater than of the former. I will fill this house with glory."

But I cannot leave this chapter upon the writings of St. Paul without for a moment referring to a subject upon which he has written most plainly, that of marrying "only in the Lord." The light in which he has set it forth to us is at

once both true and striking; and what he has said, he has said with so much decision and authority as to set the matter for ever at rest. He has left it to us without occasion for another word of dispute or discussion. "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? and what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel." (2 Cor. vi. 14.) One would have thought, after a thing so absolutely forbidden by God as this, no child of His could dare break the Divine law; but is it so? If the laity offend herein, there is no excuse; but if those who bear the vessels of the Lord, and have consequently another and distinct call to holiness, transgress in this point, they are, I think, in danger of the utmost rigour of the Divine law (Matt. v. 22), for then the breaking of the law of the Divine rubric is fraught with imminent peril to immortal souls. And still I know those who take themselves the very highest position in the Evangelical party, with wives not only unregenerate and spiritually dead, but more frivolous than village lace girls. For years I have been intimate with such without hearing of little more than love and valentines. What wonder if with such busybodies as these, going from house to house, there should spring up confusion and every evil work. And these are the women who set themselves up as judges of virtue; who draw facial contortions over that which is technically called vice; at whose bar the children of the Kingdom

of God, a very spiritual priesthood, are to be condemned. I do not say that the servants of Christ may not have the misfortune to marry godless women ; but if they have done so, surely they should be deeply humiliated on that account, watch very guardedly the enemy of souls in them, and all unhappy, disastrous collision by their means ; for they may be daily counteracting a life of usefulness. Satan will take advantage of such a position to clothe the child of light with darkness, and seeming apathy, and the servant of darkness with light. Thus, how true were the words of the wise man, "One sinner destroyeth much good." (Eccles. ix. 18.) The true servant of God will indeed feel this to be an evil and a bitter thing ; but he must bear his reproach. "He that is of a faithful spirit concealeth the matter."

But here I would say one word to those wives who have so presumptuously ventured upon a calling for which they are perfectly unfitted. From the abounding mercy of God, it may be a day of grace granted to you. "The longsuffering of God is salvation ;" but see you profit by it. It may be the last, or if, in the persistence of His grace, He purposes your salvation, He may employ afflicting, devastating means to awaken you from the dead. He may Himself snap the sacred tie of affection of him to whose work you are a hindrance, whose light you are obscuring, reflecting, and whom you are clothing with darkness ; or He may take that life, and leave you to be exhibited in your native self ; or He may take your life, and leave you in your native darkness ; so that

the barrier to the conversion and salvation of souls may be broken down. "Satan hindered us."

But I would say to *all* who are unequally yoked together with unbelievers, your position is more responsible and awful than you are yourselves aware. Neither impatience, trifling, distrust of the mercy, power, and willingness of God, despair, or pretended repugnance to the spirit of the world and of Antichrist, can serve you in the work of love to God, which you have engaged yourself to perform, for as a Christian you are amenable to the whole of the Divine law. (1 Pet. iii. 1—5.) You have sold yourself to the spirit of Belial, and must be redeemed without price, even by the Lord who bought you. Therefore your position must still be that of a penitent, of a transgressor of the Divine law; of a waiting believer; of a constant, earnest suppliant; of a resolute, practical servant, determined to suffer all God's will, so that a creature of His may be saved by your means; and so that you may be found faithful in a husband's or in a wife's ministry. God may have suffered this outbreak of your fallen nature, or rather, He may overrule it to be an administration of the last, extreme unction of His grace to a rebel from Him. If you are not faithful, that soul will be required at your hand; if you are, salvation may go forth as a lamp that burneth; if it do not, you will be guiltless; but over that man or that woman will be written, "Whose damnation is just."

CHAPTER XVI.

ON THE RESURRECTION.

"THERE is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacle of the most High." I cannot leave the recondite, corroborative writings of the last chosen Apostle of the Christian Church; the corroborative phase of Redemption's glorious system, without looking again for a moment at the confluence of that river, the streams of which are to gladden our heavenly inheritance. I have said I could not trace the river any further than the ascension of Christ; but as we have seen the former, and the latter rain descend from "the white cloud," from the bow of covenant grace girding the eternal throne; the dews of life exhaled from the ocean of life as it filled the great deeps of our earth, and return again to fill her pools; so here, I must return again to the conflux of that abounding river to look for a moment at a stream issuing there, still rolling on through channels of our terrene sphere, and uniting itself with the eternal source where first rose the water of life.

"Behold, I show you *a mystery*; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed." (1 Cor. xv. 51.) Is the

doctrine of the resurrection a vague, undefined credibility in the Word of God, a bare possibility in the Christian Creed? or is it founded upon vital, philosophical principle? Upon a foundation of faith pregnant with immortality? The answer is plain, like all the Apostle's arguments, the doctrine is rooted in Christ, the author of life, the Sovereign Giver of it to our world, it is brought under "the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus." Or as St. Paul goes on to say, this law "Hath made me free from the law of sin and death." (Rom. viii. 2.) We behold the laws of nature, and they are marvellous in our eyes; life springs into existence from the remotest depths of death; spring out of winter, the full corn in the ear, from the grain dead in the earth; manhood from a law of our nature dead to our comprehension as concerning the law of life contained therein. And so the law of life in Christ Jesus, is one of the laws of His spiritual kingdom, life growing out of death, redemption out of the bondage of Satan.

What He said concerning the Sabbath may be said of the whole code of laws of His Kingdom, of all the doctrines of life in Him: "The Son of man is Lord also of the Sabbath day." The Sabbath is nothing, but "the Lord of life," and "the Lord of glory" endued it with life; preaching is nothing, but He endued His own institution with life; the sacraments are nothing, but administered with faith in Him, they are endued with life. (Heb. i. 3; Col. iii. 24; Dent. xxxiii. 27.) "Ye will not come unto me, that ye might have life." "I have come that they might have life, and that they

might have it more abundantly." It is the same vital stream, the same law of life which is to quicken, to revivify the dark region of the long forgotten dead. The work of Christ not only restored "the Spirit of God" to the temple of natural life, but to the great charnel-house of the dead.

"The Holy One" could not see corruption, immaculate nature could not decay (Acts ii. 31—34); with His last breath he commended His Spirit to His Father (Luke xxiii. 46), then having conquered sin and death, "the Spirit of life" in Him rose One with the eternal Spirit of the Father, who restored it to the incorruptible temple, which had not forfeited its inherent, native life. And then, as that life had been laid down for the life of the world, and as that temple had suffered death, that death might be destroyed, the life of that blood was made efficacious to the grave of earth into which He had descended. (Levit. xvii. 11; Heb. xiii. 20.) "That through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil." (Heb. ii. 14.) Here are the title-deeds of the dead, these are the laws of the kingdom of God; the sceptre of the king of terrors was broken, "life" triumphed over him who had the power of death. "If the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you." (Rom. viii. 10, 11.)

The doctrine of the resurrection was a very prominent one in the teaching of the Apostles. They weighed in their minds

the why and wherefore of it, and they grasped the mighty subject, and set the radical cause before us in few words, "The Holy One and the Just, the Prince of life," (Acts iii. 14, 15,) they found the essential holiness of His nature to be "the power of his resurrection," made alike efficacious to all through Him. (Phil. iii. 10, 11.) Declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the *Spirit of holiness*, by the resurrection from the dead. (Rom. i. 4.) Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it. (Acts ii. 24.) "Being put to death in the flesh but quickened by the Spirit." (1 Pet. iii. 18.) "Like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the *glory* of the Father."

The question very naturally arises here, what will be the state of the spirit between the death of the body and the resurrection? I think the answer is plain: as the Spirit of life is God, so the renovated, redeemed spirit of man will be, is, one with Christ, till He again unites it to the body. "I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God" (Rev. vi. 9)—this means, under Christ. And again, "We know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." (2 Cor. v. 1, 2, 3—5.) Whether spirits retain their individuality in that intermediate state, I do not know; their Head can give them individuality, and send them forth to do His will as He will; but that they are one with the Eternal Spirit of life there

can be no doubt. It is the Spirit of *God* that dwells in us, and that same Spirit which is to quicken our mortal bodies. (Rom. viii. 11.) And hence it is that that intermediate state is likened to sleep: "Them which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him." (1 Thess. iv. 14.) "We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed. Thou shalt *rest*, and stand in thy lot at the end of the days." (Dan. xii. 13.) I know there is a strong feeling against this non-individuality of the soul in its intermediate state; the poetry of religion is against it; but let us rise higher than the poetry, or even the sublimity of our religion. Let us attain to truth, to life eternal, the highest pinnacle which can be attained to, and these can only be obtained by Oneness with God in Christ. In that glorified state, individuality will be all that sleeps, the mortal all that is at rest; the soul and spirit merged in Christ will be partakers alike of the glory of the Father, and of the Son. (1 John xvii. 22; Rev. xxi. 11.) "Abraham's bosom" signifies the bosom of God, although by the expression, Christ humoured, or rather levelled His meaning to the heretical understanding of the Pharisees. (Luke xvi. 22.) But be the intermediate state of our existence between death and judgment what it may, we know for that stupendous arraignment the soul will be reunited to the body, thus ever to remain. "The Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first." (1 Thess. iv. 16.) What voice, what power is this? the same

as brought Christ from the dead. (Rom. viii. 11.) "Behold, there was a great earthquake: for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it." (Matt. xxviii. 2.) This earthquake was, doubtless, a great vibratory motion of "the power of God," as on the day of Pentecost. "When they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled." (Acts iv. 31; ii. 2.) Just so was the earth and the sepulchre shaken when the Spirit of God claimed its incorruptible temple. But does the resurrection of Christ in any way affect the great congregation of the dead? Yes. "He that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit" (1 Cor. vi. 17), and just as that Spirit returned to claim "The Head," so the same God the Spirit, will return to claim the members; "God hath raised up the Lord, and will also raise up us by his own power. Know ye not that *your bodies* are members of Christ?" (vi. 14, 15.) "We groan within ourselves, waiting for the redemption of the body."

But for the further elucidation of this subject, we must turn to that Divine resurrection sermon in 1 Cor. xv.; I say Divine, because it is not of human teaching. The Apostle in a moment opens the subject by going to the radical point,— "If Christ be preached that he rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead?" Upon that vital foundation he bases his argument, and builds it up. "If the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised." "Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are

hed." "As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall e made alive." "He must reign till he hath put all lies under his feet"—that is, reign spiritually till sin, 1, his entire kingdom be destroyed. "The last enemy shall be destroyed is death;" in Rev. xiv. 3, we see fulfilled. And then the Apostle soars away to the actual, ical part of his subject, and says, "But some will say, are the dead raised up? And with what body do they :? Fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened, ot it die." Now this expression of holy fervour is very rkable, the rebuke is for scepticism, unbelief. Fool, signifies some one under condemnation, under "The of sin and death," not made free therefrom by "The law fe in Christ Jesus." (Matt. v. 22; John v. 24.)

re Apostle's reproof was for ignorance, unbelief, for knowing our Saviour's words, "Except a corn of wheat nto the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, ingeth forth much fruit." (xii. 24.) For he continues argument, employing the same metaphor: "That which sowest, thou sowest not that body that shall be, but grain, it may chance of wheat, or of some other grain." as a beautiful ear of many grains grows from the appa-ycorrupt, dead grain; and just as the oak starts, and grows the acorn apparently dead, so the body is to rise again the corrupt seed sown in the earth. "God giveth it a as it hath pleased him, and to every seed his own body." meaning of this verse clearly is, that Christ hath given

to every seed sown in the earth—that is to every body of His elect Church sown there—the holiness, the spotless innocence of His own body, of “The Holy One,” and hence the lawfulness of “The redemption of the body.”

And thus the Apostle continues, even in these terrene regions, there are different natures, and different degrees of glory, even as in natural existence; and then returning again to the root of his reasoning, because God has given to every seed the essential nature of His own body, he says: “So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption: it is sown in dishonour (See Levit. xiv, 45); it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power: it is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body. And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam a quickening spirit. Howbeit that was not first which was spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual. The first man Adam is of the earth, earthy; the second man is the Lord from heaven.” The Lord *of life*. “As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy: and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly. And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.” This spiritual disquisition is so beautiful, so glowing, so vital, and so glorious, that the study of it almost seems to ally us with the glorified spirits in Christ. And then the Apostle goes on to say, “Now this I say, brethren, that

and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God." Whether constitution of our bodies will be changed to inherit the kingdom of God, or whether He here meant our carnal nature, then confirmed His assertion, "Neither doth corruption inherit incorruption, we do not know." I think one of the dearest sights in the vision of St. John is the representative of the redeemed Church, and of the inspired penmen of the kingdom of God, material nature in spirit, and adoring. "Thou hast redeemed us to God by thy blood." (iv. 4, 9.) This is the ascription of the redeemed Church. St. John says, "Not of flesh and of blood, neither of corruption, but of a spiritual, glorious body." "God giveth to every man his own body." Oh, then, family of God on earth, drop your carnal nature, worship God in Spirit, with the redeemed above: "Thou hast redeemed us to God by thy blood." St. Paul did do so: "I am crucified to the world;" then he could break out into the triumphant song, "Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy victory? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." The Apostle says in another place, "That I may know him, the power of his resurrection." (Phil. iii. 10.) It means, not to the *glory* of His resurrection,—to the essential likeness of His nature. As I have said before, this is the life both of death and of hell. (Rev. i. 18; xx. 1, 2.) The eternal mystery of God; *the* resurrection life; *the seed*, His

own body. "It is sown in dishonour; it is raised in *glory*." And why? and how? Because "Christ was raised from the dead by the *glory* of the Father." (Rom. vi. 4.) And "If the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead, shall also quicken your mortal bodies, by his Spirit that dwelleth in you." (Ib. viii. 11.) Thus, whichever way, or whatever way we track the current of life in "the Word," the research always resolves itself into this,—that *He* is the Alpha and the Omega of all existence; the beginning and the end of all life; that seed of His own body is holiness, and that it will germ and fructify, and still *increase* till our earth,—all lost territory,—wave with a white, ripe, and abundant harvest. (Rev. xiv. 15, 16; Isa. ix. 7.) I would have arched across our sphere, engraven over the charnel-house of the dead—I would see it arching all spheres,—"The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death." "Who is made not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an *endless* life." "For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us." He is now there, "the Prince of life," even giving life. (Rom. viii. 2.) This is the current of life which rolls into the realms of the dead, and if we will believe we shall see "the glory of God." (John xi. 40.)

The Apostle's argument, that the sovereign gift of this life is the reason why we should walk in newness of life with

is weighty, and most authoritatively enforced through writings, and hence that grand arraignment of our- before God, so wisely appointed by our Church to be Easter Sunday, Col. iii. We are one with Him, both resurrection life of *holiness*, of glory, and of life eternal.

surely this glorious consummation of His work is, not only our adoration now, but our most devoted ; and thus it was the Apostle finished this sublime se, " My beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmovable, abounding in the work of the Lord ; forasmuch as ye hat your labour is not in vain in the Lord."

see, then, that the resurrection of the body is as as the resurrection of the soul from the death of sin ; is the guarantee of the other, just as the Holy Ghost orded to the temple of our living bodies ; like as a soft ; wind He enters there, and the man becomes spiritual. iii. 6—8.) Or, as when there came from heaven a soundushing mighty wind, and filled all the disciples with of light and life. I say, just as that Pentecostal cham- id the locality of the sepulchre of our Lord were shaken e power of God," so the great charnel-house of the ill be shaken by the same spiritual, quickening power : temples which here had been filled with the life of God, raised by the same Spirit, and clothed with immortality. itual life and resurrection life are synonymous in the of the Spirit ; and thus it is that, in that remarkable r (the thirty-seventh of Ezekiel) this duplex doctrine,—

the resurrection, first of the soul, and then of the body, —is so grandly taught. There is distinctly taught the resurrection of the whole house of Israel (Ib. xxxvii. 11); while the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead is clearly set forth.

The argument of Christ upon the subject, with the Sadducees, is vital, and of great latitude. They did not believe in the resurrection, neither in angel nor spirit. By the most simple reasoning He opened to them both of these. "As touching the resurrection of the dead, have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God, saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living." The force of the argument is in this, that God was *then* the God of the three patriarchs, of their living spirits, and that vital truth involved the necessity of the resurrection of their then dead bodies.

"Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God. For in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven." (Matt. xxii. 30—32.) A redeemed body, soul, and spirit constitute an angel. And in this same sense we are now angels; for if we are not redeemed in this life, after death we shall not be good angels. Hence the designation "angels" in the Apocalypse;—the redeemed, temples of the Spirit of God, employed in the service of Christ, are angels. All the patriarchs, prophets, and elders of the Church, who believed in the promise of the Everlasting Covenant, believed, too, in

the doctrine of life in Him, and of the resurrection. "Women received their dead raised to life again: and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they *might obtain a better resurrection.*" "They that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country." (Heb. xi. 35; 13, 14.) Job's words are as lucid upon the subject as St. Paul—may I say, as Christ could make it. (Job xix. 25, 26.) And David seems rather to confirm the doctrine than to broach any new theory. "As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied when I *awake with thy likeness.*" (Ps. xvii. 15.) Oh, let us rejoice, that *God* hath given "to every seed his own body." Our physical nature, our bodies, are one incorporate with the body of Christ. "We are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones." (Eph. v. 30.) His body died, and thereby brought forth much fruit, and we shall awake with His likeness.

Moses and Elijah upon the Mount of Transfiguration did not, as some think, represent there only the law and the prophets. I believe they were there, the one a type of the resurrection, and the other a type of those, when men shall not die, but when death shall be swallowed up of life. They had traversed the realms of space, to appear there in their glorified state, "and spake to Christ of his decease which he should accomplish at Jerusalem." (Luke ix. 31.) And just so, after the general resurrection, will redeemed, glorified beings pass and repass from world to world, from mansion to mansion of the blessed, from region to region of infinite space. "They are as the angels of God in heaven." When

we can fathom, compass, or at all grasp those two short sentences, "The power of God," "Christ the power of God," then, but not till then, may we conjecture upon the extent, and surpassing wonder of the resurrection life and glory. "Though Christ was crucified through weakness, yet he liveth by the power of God. We also are weak in him, but we shall live with him by the power of God." (2 Cor. xiii. 4.) "God in Christ," "I AM THAT I AM," "the Alpha and the Omega," stretches over the realm of the dead, "the Lord of life," to breathe life there. "I am he that liveth, and was dead, and have the keys of death and of hell."

Here a great field of thought opens to us, and we gather from it holy confidence upon the great promise made throughout the Word of God. "The restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all the holy prophets since the world began." (Acts iii. 21.) The earth, cursed for man's sake, will, by the Second Adam, be so restored, that she shall first yield her increase without labour, and then, "the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption." The work of Christ so restored the Spirit of God to our errant world, that all nature will be restored to primeval purity. I love to think of the redemption of "things under the earth."

If the dead in Christ be raised by the power of His Spirit, by the trumpet of His life, how and by what means will the lost be raised? Hear His own remarkable words upon the subject:—"Verily, verily, I say unto you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of

the Son of God : and they that hear shall live. For as the Father hath life in himself ; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself ; and hath given him authority to execute *judgment also*, because he is the Son of man. Marvel not at this : for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice ! And shall come forth ; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life ; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.” (John v. 25—29.) Then it will be the voice of justice and of judgment that will awaken the lost from the sleep of death ; the trumpet-voice of that Judge who has authority to execute them. How terrible will be the blast of that trumpet ! how ponderous the voice of Christ in judgment ! “ On whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder.” No life of His in them will spring into everlasting existence, but the sentence of “ the second death ” will consign them to the blackness and outer darkness of hell. “ Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.” (Matt. xxv. 41.) Thus, when we read, that “ the beast, and the false prophet were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone ” (Rev. xix. 20), and “ the dragon, that old serpent, which is the devil and Satan ” (xx. 1, 2), it means the whole body of the lost, in the devil, and one with him, just as the redeemed Church is seen to be one with the Lamb. Now, every unredeemed spirit at death wings its way to him to await final judgment.

Mark the expression, “ That the shame of thy nakedness do not appear ; ” then, the shame, and the nakedness of the

lost will appear. The light, and life, and holiness, and glory of God, His kingdom in her restitution robes, in her clothing of white raiment, will in a moment flash condemnation upon the kingdom of darkness. "As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy: and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly." How great then will be the contrast between life and death; between glory and the grave. But conscience will then be alive, agonized, tormented by the sting of death. "The strength of sin is the law." The forewarning voice is most awful: "Cast *alive* into a lake of fire burning with brimstone." Oh, let this be indelibly engraven upon our minds.

Then, how perilous must be a mere natural religion, the human economy alone regulated by outward decency, while the soul is dead to God, no law of the Spirit of life actuating to deeds of charity, benevolence, and peace; no seal of the Spirit, the credential of our sovereign Lord. This religion may appear beautiful outward, but beware! it is the devil; "earthy," he may be an angel of light; but I would say, beware of delusion: like an *ignis fatuus*, natural religion is delusive, and can only lead on to regions of darkness and everlasting despair: turn from it, retrace your steps while "the true light" is still shining before you to direct your way.

There are some passages in the Apocrypha so remarkable upon the subject of the resurrection, that here I cannot help referring you to them. (2 Esdras iv. 40—42; viii. 8, 9.) Perhaps it will be said these books are not inspired, the

tone is not that of the Bible: let us beware how we come to this conclusion with regard to these two particular books. Compare the passages I have referred you to with Rom. viii. 22; Isa. lxvi. 7—9; John xvi. 21, 22; Gal. iv. 19; Isa. liii. 11; liv. 1; and with many others in the inspired volume, and you will find nature's travail a common metaphor of that spiritual travail which in nature and grace is creating all things new.

But, as I have touched upon the subject of these two very remarkable books of Esdras, I must now enter into a little further detail respecting them. If they are read carefully they will be seen to be a perfectly different style to the other books of the Apocrypha, which were written at Alexandria by learned Jews between the time of the last inspired writer Malachi, and the birth of Christ. But Esdras is the same as Ezra, the Greek of Ezra; and as the Greeks at that time had great intercourse both with the Jews and their writings, and as Ezra had been one of the most diligent and favoured students of the sacred writings during the captivity (vii. 6, 10, 12), I ask if the first book of Esdras may not have been rather a translation of the book of Ezra, or matter very carefully collected from the sacred writings? The book is scriptural, and I think the mind of the Spirit. And then the second book of Esdras, I would ask, may it not have been originally the work of Ezra? May it not in some way have been left out of the Hebrew canon when Simon the Just added to the collection of sacred books made by Ezra in

captivity the books of Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, and Malachi? I think from the character of the book, this must have been so. The matter of it is solemn, and deep, even to awful importance; there is the same deep searching of the Spirit as there is in inspiration; the same deep inquiry concerning the mysteries of God, and the mystery of iniquity; it was the work of a mind deeply imbued with truth. It is clear that the book was originally written at Babylon, and not at Alexandria (iii. 1, 2), and there is in it all the anxious concern of the exile, all the affliction of the oppressed captive, the deep inquiry of God concerning His Church, the fervency of an overwrought mind; and the prophetic spirit is one in matter and foreshadow with all the prophets. As I have often said, inspiration is a begotten power, and prophecy more especially has always been the product of spiritual travail. The greatness, holiness, and intenseness of Ezra's character never could have been formed but in affliction. "He was a ready scribe in the law of Moses, which the Lord God of Israel had given," and the hand of the Lord his God was upon him." The visions and revelations of this book appear to me to be the product of his mind. "The Messiah," or "the Christ" in Greek, is distinctly prophesied of. The Messiah is nowhere prophesied of by name but here, and in Daniel. "My son Jesus shall be revealed with those that be with him, and they that remain shall rejoice within four hundred years." This prophecy is one with Zech. iii. 1, 3, 8, 9; vi. 11—13, but certainly not borrowed from it.

"After these years shall my son Christ die, and all men that have life." It would almost seem, that this verse is the root of the second vial of the Apocalypse (Rev. xvi. 3) ; the meaning in both passages may be the same, that the death of Christ evidenced that all men had died to God. "And the world shall be turned in the old silence seven days, like as in the former judgments : so that no man shall remain." What this prophecy refers to I cannot say, it is one of the mysteries not revealed ; it may refer to the seven dispensations of time, in which man is declared to be dead in sin ; or it may refer to the periods under the seven thunders, not to be written in our world ; or it may refer to the redemption of our earth under a former dispensation (Rev. x. 4), whatever may have been the mind of the Spirit, it well becomes us to reflect upon these dark similitudes of revelation, upon the awful realities that must be therein involved, that they could only be thus mystically revealed. "And after seven days, the world that yet awakeneth not, shall be raised up, and that shall *die that is corrupt*. And the earth shall restore those that are asleep in her, and so shall the dust those that dwell in silence, and the secret places shall deliver those souls that were committed unto them." (Esdras vii. 28, 30—32.)

And so again, if you read the eleventh and twelfth chapters you will find the prophecy of a power under the emblem of an eagle, which evidently means Rome, the Roman eagle, as it does in Ezek. xvii. 3, 4 ; Rev. xii. 14. And there, too, we read of "the lion of the tribe of Judah" (xi. 37—39 ; xii. 11) ; evidently referring to the standard of that tribe.

In Esdras xiii. is a clear prophecy of "the man of sin," as seen in Rev. xiii., and of his subjugation by the Son of God, as seen both by Daniel and by John.

I say, again, I think we do well to beware how we reject this book. I think several parts of the Apocalypse are rooted in it; a commentary upon it, showing its connexion with the Inspired Writings, and still its distinction from them, would be most interesting. And that almost impatient, passionate waiting of the prophets for the Messiah which I have so often shown you, almost amounting to travail of soul, would be seen.

The world is ever saying, "Prophecy not unto us right things, speak unto us smooth things;" and that spirit of false hope, that cry of peace, peace, when there is no peace, has hidden from the world this book, so full of awful realities, and so deep in mystical foreshadows.

It has been said neither Christ nor His Apostles ever quoted from the Apocrypha; but I find many passages in this book, which might have been suggestive to Christ, as much so as many of the Old Testament writings which we find Him quoting. (Esdras i. 30, 32, 33; Matt. xxiii. 34, 37, 38; vii. 13, 14.) And the words of St. Paul are sufficiently similar to have been inspired by the same Spirit. (xvi. 41—44; 1 Cor. vii. 29, 30.)

When Esdras inquired of the angel whether the greater portion of time had passed, or had to come, it was made known to him that the greater part had passed (iv. 45—52); but this referred to the time of the coming of the Messiah; this was the burden of his inquiry.

CHAPTER XVII.

ON THE SACRAMENTS.

MY passing reference to the books of Esdras sprang out of the doctrine of the Resurrection; but I cannot leave the subject "of the mysteries of God," as committed to St. Paul, without for a moment referring again to the mysteries of the sacraments instituted by Christ when He instituted the Christian Church. I will always maintain that we may not reject truth because of error. We may not reject the Divine promises because some have blasphemed God's holy Word by causing a vain externalism to supersede them. We must attain by faith the spiritual gift without blaspheming the name of God in Christ by detracting from His perfect and complete work. It is to the God-man we are to look for health and life, sanctification and redemption; and as He Himself instituted the means of grace, it can only be by using diligently those means that we can obtain the blessing. When the Jews set forth faithfully the moral and ceremonial law, the Gospel of Christ and the holiness of that Gospel were distinctly seen; when they failed to do so, all was darkness, sin, and death. Had they been faithful, the true

Church never could have imbued her hands in the blood of Christ; that blood might have been shed by the Antichristian power, by "the beast;" but "the high priest" could never have passed that sentence of death, "It is expedient that one man die for the people." (John xviii. 13, 14.) I say the Church of the living God could not have been thus imbruted, thus made one with the beast in death. (Rev. xi. 7—10.) Just as God in Christ gave the keys of these mysteries to the Jewish Church, so He took them away, and committed them to His Apostles; and had the Church of this dispensation been as faithful, diligent, and as spiritual as the Blessing of the new covenant, the Spirit of God through Christ, guaranteed she might be, the world would now have been saved. The keys of the kingdom of God are in our own hands, and if we use them as Divinely commanded, scornfully spurning the use of false keys, or, as thieves and robbers, to climb up some other way, we may open that kingdom, set it so lovingly and so gloriously before the world, that the world itself shall enter in. Then let us look for a moment at these means of grace, at the Divine institutions as God has ordained them.

Christ brought every one of these under the spiritual jurisdiction of His own spiritual kingdom, to receive life from His throne, from His reign in the hearts of men, and still to communicate life till the restoration of that kingdom be legally, absolutely, and eternally proclaimed. "To know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be *filled with*

all the fulness of God. Unto him be glory *in the church* by Christ Jesus throughout *all ages, world without end.* Amen." (Ephes. iii. 19—21.) We may think the words of Christ a prophecy of His millennium reign, but they are this day fulfilled in our ears. "I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me; that ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel." (Luke xxii. 29, 30.) This is spiritually the Divine privilege, dignity, and office of the Apostolic Church now, and has been ever since Christ ascended to obtain for, and to pour forth, "the promise of his Father" upon His people. It is not the use of the spiritual, ecclesiastical power that the world has quarrelled with, but with the abuse of it, with the arrogating, dominating supremacy of the human over the Divine. It is with the usurpation of Rome that we quarrel, and not with *Christ* in His servants, sitting enthroned there in love, in humility, in peace, in Divine majesty, in glory, "judging the twelve tribes of Israel."

When I assert that this grand prophecy of Christ's is *now* fulfilled, let me not be misunderstood. It is *now* fulfilled, inasmuch as the true Church militant is always one with the Church triumphant. (Rev. vi. 9—11; Dan. viii. 13.) The flesh is mortal, but the spirit is immortal; the redeemed Church is always present, always one with God. The Apostles are round about the throne with Him (Rev. iv. 4), and "the seven spirits of God" in their successors are always round about the throne with Him (iv. 5); so, as I have said, the

promise of Christ is now fulfilled: the *true* Church is now sitting with Him upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. She has not *known*, and she does not now *know*, her privilege, her true spiritual estate; and hence the loss and the hurt she has so long sustained. But an awful thought breaks upon us here: it is the Divine privilege she is entitled to, the true knowledge of herself, of her estate in Christ, which she was left to arrive at by a diligent search of revelation, that holds her responsible to Him. She can now no more escape a reckoning-day, a judgment-day, than the two Churches before her could do so. "Occupy till I come." "Give an account of thy stewardship."

St. Paul calls the table of that kingdom "the Lord's table," and we call it "the Lord's table;" Christ Himself called it "My table:" therefore He is there; His Divine Presence has been there, with the faithful, ever since the Pass-over was fulfilled in the kingdom of God; He now partakes of the mystical sustenance of the fruit of the vine with us, and we partake of the spiritual sustenance of His kingdom with Him. (Luke xxii. 16—18.) See the spirit of Judas rankling at that table; the very spirit of Rome in the true Church springing up there. (Ver. 24.) "The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them." These kings mean priests, as the context proves. "Whether is greater, he that sitteth at meat, or he that serveth? is not he that sitteth at meat? but I am among you as he that serveth." Then it was that He appointed unto them a kingdom, "made them

kings and priests unto God and his Father," and gave them authority to judge the twelve tribes of Israel. Then He went on to say that Satan in Peter had desired to shake the foundation of that kingdom. And is he not, by ten thousand depths, and subtilties, and devices, ever trying to shake that foundation in the hearts of the true Israel? Then let us honour more the royal Guest who sits at meat with us, be well content to serve for Him, and, oh, let there be no more strife among us which shall be accounted the greatest!

"Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body." I do not, like the Roman Catholic, believe in transubstantiation; I do not believe that the bread was then, nor is now, changed into the body of Christ. But what do we believe—because these are words of extreme force—what do we understand by "blessed it"? I understand, that He consecrated it a means of grace, endued the ordinance with life, and that henceforward all who should receive it in living faith really receive life from Him, even as those who believe the Word of God in the everlasting covenant receive the efficacy of the Messiah's work and death. I am quite conscious of such a spiritual revivification, and by the grace of God I will seek it to my life's end. It is not enough to say, the sacrament is a memorial of the death of Christ; it is more; it is life. While I am not maintaining the change of substance in the elements of the Holy Eucharist, still I must maintain that, to the spiritual man, to the rightly instructed believer in

the Lord of life, they are duplex; life through faith is received in the natural elements; the last is but the symbol of the first. It has been said, Analyze the bread, and there is in it no second nature; so I might say, analyze the Word,—there is in it no second nature, but the Spirit of God is in it; and so I might say, God tells us that He dwells in us, that we are the temples of the Holy Ghost; but analyze the man, you cannot find out the seat of natural life,—how much less of God, who is “a Spirit”?

“Jesus took bread, and blessed it.” Who can understand that invocation, that benediction? Life brought from above by the Author of life, bestowed by the Sovereign Lord of life. In His ministry, and in the revelation He gave to John, the vital, spiritual, sovereign benediction constantly occurs, “Blessed.”

A volume the most consolatory and invigorating might be written upon these Blesseds. “Blessed art thou,” “Blessed are ye,” so oft repeated. Search for yourselves for those high beatitudes of heaven bestowed upon man; the study will strengthen your faith and your inner life. Here I will only extract three of them; may the life they contain be received by obedience to their demands! “Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God.” (Luke xiv. 15.) “Blessed are they that hear the word of God, and *keep* it.” (Luke xi. 28.) “Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.” O God, give to thy Church grace to walk by faith; in the day of darkness and of blast, still to live by faith,

till she be so entirely one in Christ by faith in Him, that by His Spirit she shall wake up in His glory.

“And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; for this is my blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.” (Matt. xxvi. 28.) Now here, as in the element of the bread, I do not say that the wine is changed into the blood of Christ, but I will maintain that those who receive it believingly, worthily, with a determination by the grace of God to lead a life of true holiness, do receive therein a duplex element,—“the life of God” in “the fruit of the vine” (Isa. xxv. 6), just as the life of God was in the blood shed for sin. “The life of the flesh was in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul.” (Levit. xvii. 11.)

It would almost seem the sacrificial Victim referred to this verse, when He added, “which is shed for many for remission of sins.” Just as the life of the God was in the blood, so I believe it to be in the fruit of the vine, when received in faith in the work and death of Christ.

Just as He “poured out his soul unto death,” so He poured it out unto life, both in this world and to life eternal. When it is written, “the seven stars are the angels of the seven churches” (Rev. i. 20), it is not a mere manner of speaking; our Saviour used no such vague, dubious expressions. He meant what He said. The Spirit of God

and the Messenger sent, are one being. (Rev. i. 4; iv. 5; ii 1; iii. 1.)

“But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father’s kingdom.” This prophecy is fulfilled in the apostolic Church. Christ’s glorified body does thus partake of the life of God, and supply it to her. (Zech. iv. 2, 3, 14; John xiv. 16 — 26; Col. i. 18 — 24; 1 Cor. xi. 13.) His Presence was never more in the tabernacle, or in the temple, than He is with the Christian Church, and that to *bless* her and to give her life. God gave to her the promise of life, and confirmed it by an oath; “that by two immutable things”—by His Son and by His Spirit—He would never leave her. She, on her part, is to reciprocate the oath of the covenant by an oath of consecration and allegiance.

Here I pause. For as the benefit is great when the elements are worthily received, the conditions of the oath fulfilled, so the curse is great when they are not. God never fails on His part,—not one shadow of change in Him. If the blessing be not received, the fault must be ours. “Who-soever is angry with his brother *without a cause* shall be in danger of the judgment. Therefore, if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee; leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.” (Matt. v. 23, 24.) Perhaps it was not possible for Christ to set forth in more striking language our

fitness for His table. Forgiveness was the standard reared for Himself, and the standard to which He attained when He was under the condemnation of the law, human and Divine ; and forgiveness is the standard He has reared for us. Forgiveness is a holy thing. The mind calm, placid ; not a ruffle, not a thought of revenge. " Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you." Oh, I say, this is holy, God-like ; it is the attainment of lucid, strenuous faith, of love to God, of long experience in the Christian life,—it is the victory of the spiritual life.

" To err is human, to forgive divine."

But I have seen a gift brought to the altar by one who was angry with his brother *without a cause* ; a gift bathed in duplicity and malignity,—the offerer was in danger of the judgment, " in danger of hell fire." Let us beware how we approach the most consecrated, the most holy, the most sacred, the most appealing to conscience, the most tender appeal to our hearts, to our lives,—the most Divine and most *blessed* of all our Divine institutions,—" the Lord's Table." He is Himself there. " I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me ; that ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom." " I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until the day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom." Oh, I say, let us beware how we approach that table with a shadow upon

the conscience. The soul should always be prepared for the sacrament by long, deep, fervent communion with God.

Although I have said thus much concerning this particular institution,—the Lord's Supper,—still I would add, every institution of the Bible is brought under the same spiritual jurisdiction of Christ's spiritual kingdom. By Him has been made subject to the same law of life in Himself, to that law of life which was instituted by God in Christ to free, entire existence from the law of sin and of death. The moral law was brought under spiritual jurisdiction. (Rom. vii. 14.) The Holy Scriptures are under that law of life, that spiritual jurisdiction. (John vi. 63; 1 Pet. i. 23—25.) Teaching, preaching, the ministry of the Word are brought under that spiritual jurisdiction. (2 Cor. iii. 6, 8, 17, 18; iv. 1; Heb. iii. 1, 7, 16.) The Sabbath was brought under the jurisdiction of Christ's kingdom. (Mark iii. 24 — 27; Luke xiii. 10—14, 16.) See here how the letter killeth, and how the Spirit giveth life. (Numb. xv. 32, 33.)

The ordinance of baptism is brought under the same law by Heaven. (Mark xvi. 16; John iii. 5.) But I would add here, it has been brought again under the bondage of sin and death by man; it is still of the earth, earthy. All these are ordinances endued with life, when spiritually administered and spiritually received.

So, too, we have seen of the burial service, of the doctrine of the resurrection; and what can I say of the Church as a body, an instrument, an agent? She is endued with life.

To which page, to which verse of the New Testament can we turn, and not read this,—“*Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona : for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven ?*” (Matt. xvi. 16, 17.) “The seven stars [or spirits] are the angels of the seven Churches.” (Rev. i. 4, 20.) To be spiritual is to be “blessed,” to be spiritual is to be endued with life, to be under “the law of life in Christ Jesus.” “He that believeth on me, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. But this he spake of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive : for the Holy Ghost was not yet given ; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.” (John vii. 39.) But when He was exalted to the right hand of God, He became for ever to the Church a Spiritual Head, “after the power of an endless life.” And thus, what He Himself caused to be written of the Sabbath, may be written above the lofty portals of the Divine institutions,—“The Son of man is Lord also of them all.” But let me add here, it is the extreme privilege,—Divine grace,—which at once brings down condemnation, and the unalterable sentence of death upon those who dare to partake of the endued elements unworthily. Life or death are in the cup ; life or death are in the bread, just as the blood of Christ is life to the believer, and damnation to the unbeliever.

These are “the Mysteries of God,” with which the great apostle was intrusted, with which the Christian Church is intrusted. (Rev. i. 19, 20.) Truly she may say, and feel with Him, “Without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness.” To me it appears an overwhelming, awful responsi-

bility committed to her ; who is ready with Him to enter into the travail of soul which He did : " My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you." Oh, I would here ask those who say the world is at an end, the Millennium is at the door, Is " the mystery of iniquity " uprooted, gone ? Is this life, this " Mystery of God," established in the earth ? No, His voice extends over a long era of time, " In the days of the voice of the *seventh* angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished." (Rev. x. 7.) Then I do not know for her a more suitable prayer than that of David, " Create in me a clean heart, O God ; and *renew a right* spirit within me" (Ps. li. 9, 10, 11) ; a spirit purified, itself taught so as to receive life, and to administer it to the world, is alone an agent of God. " I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up." Let her try more to soar to heaven, and not think to bring the Lord of life and glory again to earth : " Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect." Oh, then, I would have arched over our world : " God was manifest in the flesh : *justified in the Spirit.*"

But before leaving the writings of St. Paul, I must notice for a moment his earnest, holy solicitude for his own people. I can never read his ninth and eleventh chapters of his Epistle to the Romans, without feelings of admiration and veneration for his at once patriotic, yet truly catholic spirit ; with what outpourings of the spirit from the depths of his inmost soul did he open the subject : " I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in

the Holy Ghost, that I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart. For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh." (ix. 1, 2, 3.) "Hath God cast away his people? God forbid. *For I* also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin." (xi. 1.)

The Apostle seemed to feel that he stood there a connecting link, a monument of the grace of God to the Jew and to the Gentile; he seemed to scan "the breadth, and length, and depth, and height of the love of Christ" towards both, and would even then have seen them fellow-heirs of the same promises in Him,—“This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief. Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me *first* Jesus Christ might show forth all longsuffering, for a *pattern* to them which should hereafter believe on him to everlasting life.” His appeal to the Gentile Church on behalf of the Jew in those two chapters is touching, and full of solemn argument; her standing was only upon the same ground whereon the other had stood, and therefore as liable to fall as she, “Be not high-minded, but fear.”

Is the Christian Church under no obligation to the Apostle, that his earnest appeal should not be sacred to her? Not to meet the Jews only as fellow citizens, and just tolerantly as unbelievers, but to meet them as fellow heirs of the grace of God,—“As touching the election you are beloved for the fathers' sakes.”

His laboured definitions to convince his people are so important to us, that they are ever a claim for our sympathy and exertion with him in the recovery of the Jews to the faith. From his love, and anxious care for them, and at the same time the noble abandonment of himself to his calling of Apostleship to the Gentile Church, sprang all that deep defined matter on the Gospel of Christ, which God saw to be so necessary to the establishment of His Church in her most holy faith.

It is to him we are indebted for the most lucid explanation of the doctrine of the Spirit; his religion was spiritual, the practical grows out of that; so that from his opening to us more broadly the spiritual world, the spiritual warfare, we seem, as it were, led on to a right understanding of the spiritual history set forth in the Apocalypse: the Word of God is thus conjointly constituted, that one part may elucidate another, be a key to another; that the mind of the same Spirit may be seen; that the whole may be firmly grasped, and be to our errant world a guiding star by day, and a pillar of fire by night.

Then our gratitude to St. Paul should be evinced by unaffected purpose towards his people, over whom his spirit yearned with so much tenderness,—“Are they Hebrews? So am I. Are they Israelites? So am I.” The very restraint that was laid upon him as the divinely ordained apostle to the Gentiles, seemed to make him cling more closely to his own people; and thus it is that he ever stands before us, a Divine monument of God’s sovereign design of grace to all, “Give

none offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the Church of God."

But we owe a debt of gratitude to One greater than St. Paul, to One who was himself a Jew, and whose love to his own people was of a higher order than that of the Apostle's: "When he saw the city he wept over it. O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings, and ye would not!"

And so we read again, over Lazarus, who was a type of the dead body of the Jews, "Jesus wept;" not only the wreck of nature lay at His feet, but He saw in the dead form a vivid resemblance to spiritual death, to the living, yet still dead body, held under the iron grasp of Satan, and "Jesus wept." His soul even then felt the pang of death gathering upon Him, which He was to taste for all.

The beautiful parable of the Prodigal Son, which perhaps has done more to thaw the human heart, and to bring sinners to the feet of Christ, was, too, the effusion of Him who was a Jew; nothing can exceed it in pathos and striking figure; it was a type of the wandering, dead state of every sinner, and one too of the dead state of His own people: "This my son was *dead*, and is alive again." And still, "when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him." How expressive is this of the love of Christ for His own people!

I think it remarkable that the parable of the unjust steward should follow immediately after this which sets forth

the dead state of the Jews: "Thou mayest be no longer steward." Oh, let the Christian Church beware, lest she also fail of the grace of God. I can scarcely contemplate the responsibility as steward of the mysteries of God, and of His grace to the Jew: it is not enough to say, that the time is not yet come for the Jews to be restored to the faith of the fathers: the time has long been when there should have been no compromise, or concession made of the standard of the cross before that unhappy people; when there should not have been any tolerant specious approval of the unbeliever, but when the standard of the truth of Christ should have been reared above our legislative board. Bold adherence to Christ, and to His religion, nationally as well as ecclesiastically, and an open exposure of error, is the only sure method to restore life and truth. The Gentile need not fear a curtailment of his inheritance on account of the return of the Jew. "There is bread enough and to spare. All that I have is thine." "If the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be but life from the dead?"

God's decrees have nothing to do with man's responsibility; we may read in prophecy that the restoration of the Jews is not yet, but this does not prove that the fault is not man's but God's; His prescience saw, and caused to be written the long era before they would be restored; but this only proves man's supineness, and not that He willed it. The zeal of the Church should have been like that of the Apostle: "If by any means I may provoke to emulation them which are my flesh, and might save some of them."

I have shown you the striving of the Spirit of God with Balaam and with Esau, because probably both were of the family of God as the seed of Abraham ; and as we read the writings of a modern Jewish writer, truly we see the same mighty striving of the same Eternal Spirit, because she too was of the seed of Abraham, of the house of Jacob ; and we see in her too, the same trifling with the light of heaven, the same obstinate unbelief, and the same wilful resistance of the Holy Ghost that was in them.

“ When he came to himself.” This is a remarkable expression : the people of St. Paul’s great solicitude must yet come to themselves ; the Church which was in the wilderness must be grafted into the Body of the true Church : “ God is able to graff them in again ;” that Church is yet to be a crown of glory in the hand of the Lord, a royal diadem in the hand of her God.

Let the Gentile Church never forget that her Divine Head was a Jew ; that her root and foundation is Jewish : the Apostles were Jews ; and she should consider this relationship as calling upon her tenderest sympathy. Her succession is not in her own right, but through the lineage of the house of David, through “ the root and the offspring ” slain from the foundations of the world. Thus allied by blood, and, as we have seen, by one eternal Spirit, her position becomes a very responsible one towards the fraternity of the human race ; the office of her Head is hers, and His zeal, His love, and His consecration should be hers too. She is herself still

the Church in the wilderness; if she have a more glorious pillar of fire by night, and a more cloud-capt pillar of shade by day,—spiritual sustenance more abundant than the sister kingdom, she is still the Church in the wilderness. “Well, if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he also spare not thee.” “Thou mayest be no longer steward,” may in a moment go forth, perhaps not so much for oppression and wrong, as for compromising and for usurping temporal power and glory, to the depreciation of things spiritual and eternal. Her spiritual travail, in comparison with that of her Head, is only as the butterfly flitting in the sunny breeze, to the miner labouring in the mine, or to the mariner toiling in the blast and furious tempest; nor do I know how she is to bow her neck to the yoke, or her shoulder to the labour; her lassitude is become too habitual, her trifling spirit too native, to arm herself in a moment for the coming conflict.

There is not only the Jew to restore to the house of the Lord, but there is the Canaanite to expel from her bosom. He was the canker at the vitals of the house of Israel, and he is now a worm preying upon the vitals of the true Church. Our legislation not only tolerates, but supports and educates the Antichristian power, Rome. What a compromise is this! What an alliance with her in spirit is this! Had the Joshuas, Judahs, Baraks, Gideons, Samsons, Sauls, Davids, and Solomons of old been truly faithful, the blood of the Messiah might have been shed by the last Beast of Daniel, but it would not now have rested upon that body of the true Church.

But have we not now an array of holy apostles, a noble army in the Church, who, like Samson, even in his blindness and weakness, may still arm themselves with spiritual might, and say, "O Lord God, remember me, I pray thee, and strengthen me, I pray thee, only this once, O God;" and like him, by one mighty effort, destroy all the lords of the Philistines, with the house of Dagon; and, by the Spirit and grace of God, save a long and protracted war? The faithful will, I know, remain firm, and do exploits; but the counterfeit and spurious multitude will be burned up with unquenchable fire.

I know the trifler and the nominal Christian will turn a deaf ear to the solemn things declared in the Word of God to be at the door; they will say, this teaching is too rigid, the result of disease, and not of health; but let them rather say, it is the result of experience of God's dealings with His people. The time is at hand when He will make sin felt; when to meet the travail, courage, strict adherence to the letter of the Word of God, humility, confession of neglect, and singleness of purpose, will be required; and no longer compromise, indifference, and pampering with a wily foe.

My mind is always deeply solemnized when I look upon the masses of degraded population, upon the tide of human existence that is ever rolling on to the dark, unknown ocean of eternity. Who can rescue these from destruction? The necessity seems to have outgrown the means. Some few may be snatched as brands from the burning, but what, beside Divine consecration to the great work,—the work of the Spirit,—can persuade the multitude?

Had Moses refused to listen to the Divine voice, he had never been invested with Divine authority to deliver Israel from bondage; had he refused to enter the Red Sea, her waters had never closed upon the Egyptians. "Go forward," was the command, and, in defiance of seeming impossibility, he went forward, God in him.

In what way is the Church now to go forward through the great waterfloods of the third vial of time? Not in her own strength; not in declamatory anathemas against members of her own body,—these can only bring down more swift destruction upon herself; not in blind zeal—that will only frustrate the design and grace of God; not in worry and confusion; not in that rigid demeanour which is so offensive to the world; not in that lofty pride which seeks only prominence and place; but she is now to "go forward" in faith, in calm, holy resignation to the will of God, seeking only to do His will, and to advance His glory. She is to live so near to the Author of life as that He may breathe on her the Holy Ghost; and then she will go forward as He did, with the same undaunted front, with the same meek submission.

Genuine humility and sincerity retire wounded before the daily blazoned records of the lives and good works of individuals who were known to be men laden with infirmities. And as we see added to these records of the dead the oft-told tale of the inscrutable ways of Providence in removing such an one from the field of labour in the midst of usefulness, faithful-

ness, and zeal, we feel intuitive shame of such eulogy of the instrument; it ill becomes the servants of God. His power and grace resting upon the instrument is all that should ever be eulogized. If God were to write these records, and the cause of premature removal from His service, would the paragraph be less severe than it was upon the greatest example of faithfulness that the Sacred Volume records, save of Him of whom Moses was a type? "Because ye sanctified me not."

"So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all these things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants." When will the Church learn that she is only an organ of the voice, power, and grace of God, and not God? Till she learns, and rightly feels this, she will find arched over the ruin of each succeeding dispensation of all human institutions, "My Spirit shall not always strive with man." (Gen. vi. 3.) In characters of light will be written there, "Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts." (Zech. iv. 6.)

Did we know really our spiritual responsibility we should be awed almost to despair. Our dense, native darkness is spiritual death. The Spirit is ever striving to break up that region of the dead, to give life, and life eternal, to the multitude; but we resist His power, lightly regard Him as the Spirit of Truth, and hence the protracted death of the human race, and the non-establishment of the kingdom of God. Do we not see in the best of men "the man of sin," overwhelm-

ing, almost to victory, the mighty striving of the Spirit of God within? If not wholly conqueror, he very greatly interrupts by them the progress of that kingdom in our world.

It was before that singularly simple, yet stupendous description of the last judgment (Matt. xxv.), that Christ spake the parables of the Ten Virgins and of the Talents. The one sets forth the true, living servant of Christ, and the dead impostor; the other parable, the manner in which we shall be judged at the bar of God. "The kingdom of heaven is as a man travelling into a far country, who called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods. And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one, and straightway took his journey." God in Christ did thus come and establish His kingdom in our world; to do so, did He not "travel from a far country"? Which of His servants has He left without "one talent"? To how many has He given ten? I could enumerate in some, fifty—a lucid understanding, great presence of mind, eloquence like a silver trumpet, strength and power of utterance like a god of thunder, power of reasoning like a St. Paul, efficiency and high standing from worldly distinction, the light and grace of an angel, time, benefices, and dignities assigned to his service, to say nothing of coarser gifts—money, popular favour, and name; and yet over all these might be written, "One thing thou lackest," the mainspring, "the oil in the lamp," the Spirit of God within, to move all these in the right direction. Such a man may regulate human economy to a nicety, so as "indeed

to appear beautiful outward ;” but while the inner life is wanting, he is no more advancing the kingdom of God than a heathen. No ; rather give me the “one talent,” and the true “leaven,” so that when that kingdom shall be complete, my small portion of the work may be found there. “Yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.” That kingdom will progress to completion ; but the sun of our day descends so soon upon each one of us, the shades of night close so fast upon all, that the stupendous spiritual design of God to our world is scarcely comprehended before our little flickering light goes out, or rather, before it becomes extinct here to be in union with the Eternal Orb of Light.

But we have a luminous, a glorious revelation of these mysteries of God, whereunto we do well to take heed, as unto a light shining in a dark place. The sure word of prophecy is intended to strengthen, and to lead us onward, so that we faint not in our day of service. “The dream is certain, and the interpretation thereof sure.” (Dan. ii. 45.)

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE EPISTLES OF ST. JOHN.

BEFORE leaving the writings of the New Testament, I must, for a moment, glance at an almost perfect model of Christian character—I say *almost*, because of his own record,—“If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves;” but in St. John, the stigma, sin, was taken away, and I may scripturally say, a perfect model of Christian character. “The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.” (1 John i. 7.) As sanctified by the truth, and justified by faith, he seemed even in this life, to stand pre-eminent above the other Evangelists; and perhaps it was by these he attained to the highest dignity which can be attained to on earth,—“the disciple whom Jesus loved.” (John xxi. 20.) He taught more lucidly the divinity of Christ than they; his love was more filial than theirs; he reposed more confidently upon the breast of Deity than they, and hence his sublime knowledge, his Divine revelations, and his designation, “the Divine.”

St. John is said to have lived to be nearly a hundred years of age. In him, then, we see a being one with God the Father, with the Son, and with the Spirit of Truth: and he

had only to drop the mortal, to be one with them in glory. These three Epistles are remarkable for three distinct points—life in and through Christ alone; obedience, the indigenous fruit of that life; and the consummation of that life,—“love, the fulfilling of the law.” Let us look at the three, and in them we shall see how the Apostle stood, calm, holy, and believing, before the then fast approaching-judgment of the Jewish nation, before a martyr’s death; how he stood triumphant over the world, the flesh, and the devil. How truly in him the love of God was perfected; how the inner life was perfected without a ruffle, without a jar of human thought to shake the edifice of God, without a zephyr of earth without, or a struggle of conflicting element within to trouble the heaven there.

The first Epistle opens with a Divine commendation “of the Word of life.” I say Divine, because he said he had seen it, and felt it; and no one who is not born of God, who has not two natures, the human and the spiritual, can say this. “The life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and show unto you that eternal life which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us. Our *fellowship* is *with the Father*, and with his Son Jesus Christ.”

“Ye have an unction from the Holy One, and know all things.” (ii. 20.) Was not this the doctrine of life? “If that which ye have heard from the beginning shall remain in you, ye also shall continue in the Son, and in the Father. And this is the promise that he hath promised us, eternal life. The anointing which ye have received of him abideth

in you, and ye need not that any man teach you : but as the same anointing teacheth you all things, and is truth?" (ii. 25—27.) Is not this to be one with the Spirit of truth and of life ? " Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit. And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son the Saviour of the world. Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God." (iv. 13—15.) " Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ, *is born* of God. Whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world : and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God ? It is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth. He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself. This is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life : and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life." I would ask again, is not this the doctrine of life ; or, as St. John, in 2 Epist. 9, calls it, " the doctrine of Christ ? " " He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son." And then his soul, overflowing with the life of God, rose in holy zeal and holy indignation against those who would have seduced the Church from the faith ; and he continued, " If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed : for he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds." " In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because

that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might *live* through him." *Live*: that is, not come under condemnation; live, one in life with Him; live in temporal government with Him. (Luke xxii. 29.) "*Reign* in life by one Jesus Christ." "If we suffer, we shall also reign with him." This, then, is the doctrine of life as taught by this living Epistle of it. But there is an awful contrast to it. "There is a sin unto death. I do not say that you shall pray for it."

But there is a statement in these last writings of St. John which seems to require particular notice under this head of our subject, for this doctrine of life is therein involved. (1 Epist. v.) The chapter opens upon the subject of faith: "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God: and every one that loveth him that begat, loveth him also that is begotten of him." The question I would ask here is, what is meant, and what do we understand, by Jesus Christ *begotten* of God? We say in our Church service, and very scripturally, "Conceived by the Holy Ghost. Begotten, not made." Was this Divine conception, this miraculous act of procreation in our world of God alone, or was there also human faith brought to bear in that procreative, producing power? I know God to have been the Great First Cause: "That which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost." (Matt. i. 20.) "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the *power* of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God." (Luke i. 35.) This is one "of the

mysteries of God," and I have heard it flatly denied by nominal Christians ; but if God has given "to every seed his own body" in the region of the dead (1 Cor. xv. 38), why should it be thought impossible that He should do it in the realm of the living ? But what I wish to make seen here is the coalescing, or uniting power. What power was this ? Faith : the gift of God. At the time the Messiah came, the Church as a body was a ruin ; desolation, destruction, and despair reigned around ; still in the Elect according to grace there was faith—faith which amounted to such a travail of soul that it brought forth the long-expected promise, Blessing, Substance of the everlasting covenant. O mighty faith ! What canst thou not do ? "Faith is the *substance* of things hoped for. Through faith the worlds were framed by the word of God." (Heb. xi. 1—3.) Oh, Church of the *living* God ! what mayest thou not do by faith ? "If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place ; and it shall remove : and nothing shall be impossible unto you." (Matt. xxvii. 20.) "He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also ; and greater works than these shall he do ; because I go unto my Father. Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son." (John xiv. 12, 13.) Oh, Church of the living God ! I ask again, what mayest thou not do by faith ? What mayest thou not yet beget by faith ? God, who gives to us "the spirit of grace and of supplication, is of infinite resource ; our Creator is the Procreator in this

world lost to Him; a Procreator in Christ, "by whom he made the worlds," that He might be glorified in Him. Oh, then, fear not once again to be derobed of earthly power and glory; fear not sorrow,—it is that you may beget; fear not travail,—it is that you may bring forth; fear not to be sent in fractions throughout the world,—it will be that you may engender "the life" that is in you. Learn to estimate aright that life, the invisible before the visible; and then you will only rejoice that you should be counted worthy to bear the light of it before the world, when the pitchers thereof are broken. (Judg. vii. 18—20.) "When I am weak, then am I strong." "As soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth her children." Then I would say, "Awake, awake; put on thy strength, O Zion." "The just shall *live* by his faith." And life begets life.

But to return to the exposition of St. John upon the subject of the conception and incarnation of Christ. Faith was still the point of his reasoning, the strength of his argument. (1 John v. 4, 5.) And then he added, "This is he that came by water and blood, Jesus Christ; not by water only, but by water and blood." We say, scripturally, "Flesh of the substance of his mother;" hence by blood Christ was, and is, allied to the human family. But what does it mean—He came by water? I have shown you in His conversation with Nicodemus, that "except a man be born of water," means born of the Word, of "the Spirit of truth," or of life incarnate in the Word. The element of water was made to signify that life, or the incarnate Spirit, as the

element of air ; or, to use Christ's own expression, as wind does in the next verse. (John iii. 6—8.) See this more fully explained in John xv. 3 ; 1 Pet. i. 23 ; Eph. v. 26.

But the question still occurs, how was it that "Christ came by water ?" I think by the faith of the Church in *the promise*, which was to her the water of life (Read Isaiah lxi. 1—3 ; liv. 1, 5, 6 ; lix. 9—21) the element of regeneration, the river of salvation, throughout the Jewish economy ; the Church in her ruin and misery drank of that stream of life. See her in Luke i. from the forty-second verse. May we not say that she drank in life from the promises, that "Jesus Christ came by water ?" Her mighty faith grasped the reality (i. 41) ; so that it might be truly said, "Not by water only, but by water and blood."

"And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth." (1 John v. 6.) This is as when St. Paul said, "God was manifest in the flesh, justified [or evidenced] in the Spirit." (1 Tim. iii. 16.) May I say, the calm, holy, confident, mighty faith of the Church brought down the Holy Ghost from heaven, and hence the union of natures, the incarnate God. Christ was not "a man" to "be born again ;" He was "born of water and the Spirit." And hence He was called, "the Son of the Highest."

I know the *Creator* was in the virgin's womb (Col. i. 15, 16) ; but we know, too, that natural laws operated in the immaculate conception and *growth* of the infant Jesus. "Flesh of the substance of his mother." "Begotten, *not made*." "By water and *by blood*." "He took not on him the

nature of angels, but the *seed of Abraham*." The life, the God, was not taken into material nature as the soul was in the creation of Adam. "The Lord God formed man, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life." (Gen. ii. 7.) "She was found with child of the Holy Ghost." (Matt. i. 18.) And still, in the union of the two natures, the human with the Divine, natural laws bore their part; the blood received "the life," and "the Word, who was "the life, was made flesh." (John i. 1, 4, 14.) Therefore, when St. John says, "came by water and blood, not by water only, but by water and blood," he simply means that the Church, by faith in the oath of God, which He had sworn to her, "to be a God unto thee" (Gen. xvii. 7; xxii. 16), brought down "the life" incarnate in the promise, in the Word, and "*by blood*." "He became flesh, and dwelt among us." I know an angel was sent from heaven to announce the heavenly visitant, that the personality of the God was as distinct as "the Lord Jehovah" is distinct from His creatures; but if the little, persecuted, afflicted Church had not had faith she could not have received the *substance* of the covenant into her womb. He could not have come by blood. St. Paul explains this subject better than I can, and carries on his logical argument, even to the assertion that we are to receive the Third Person in the Holy Trinity by the same mighty faith. (Heb. vi. 13, 15—20.) "Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that *believeth* that Jesus is the Son of God?" "This *is he that came* by water and blood," or signifying by faith, by receiving "the life," "the

Word," which "was God." "Jesus Christ, not by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth." (1 John v. 5, 6.)

But St. John goes on to say, "There are three that bear record [or witness] in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one,"—one in spirit, in being; three in office. But what did he mean here by the use of the expression, "the Word?" It is peculiarly his own. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." And in Revelation xix. 13, we see the conqueror Christ designated eternally, "the Word of God." Now, I ask, what is the office of Christ in heaven which gains for Him the appellation, "the Word of God?" As the God incarnate in Revelation He is this: He can wield that "sword of the Spirit" as He will; He can slay, wound, heal, console, give sight, and command life by it as He will, and when He will: in His hand it is fire to purify, or to consume; it is a hammer to break to pieces; a nail to fasten in a sure place. (Zech. x. 4; Jer. xxiii. 29; Heb. iv. 12.) And thus it is that we find, "the Word which liveth." "The Word of life," represented in heaven in Seraphim and Cherubim, forms (Isa. vi. 1—3; Ezek. i. and x. chapters; Rev. iv. 6—8), and the voice of the Almighty speaking therefrom." (Ezek. x. 5.) The Spirit of life therein. "In the Word was life; and the life was the light of men." (John i. 4.) But, it may be asked, how could those cherubim and seraphim give glory as redeemed ones, if they were temples of the

Incarnate God? (Rev. v. 9, 10; Isa. vi. 3.) Just as the seven angels of the seven Churches are the instruments of God, and still the seven spirits before His throne are the one God in them, speaking to the seven Churches; and hence the adoration of these same representative body of the ministers of the Word: "Thou hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign with thee." (Rev. v. 10.) As I have shown you before, the prophecy of Christ is *now* fulfilled. "I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me; that ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on the thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel." (Luke xxii. 30.) Just as God and the seraphims and cherubims are seen to be one; and still they are seen to worship, and give glory to Him; so the Church is one with her Head, Christ; and still she is ever worshipping and giving glory to Him. Trace the meaning of these cherubims and seraphims. I cannot extract them here. (Exod. xxv. 22; Numb. vii. 29; 1 Sam. iv. 4; 2 Sam. vi. 2; 1 Kings vi. 23; 2 Kings xix. 15; Isa. xxxvii. 10; Ps. lxxx. 1; xcix. 1; Ezek. x. 2—7; ix. 3.) "There will I meet with thee, and I will commune with thee from above the mercy-seat, from between the two cherubims which are upon the ark of the testimony, of all things which I will give thee in commandment unto the children of Israel." "Give ear, O *Shepherd* of Israel: thou that dwellest between the cherubims, shine forth."

Do we now understand what the angel meant when he said to Mary, "He shall reign over the house of Jacob for

ever ; and of his kingdom there shall be no end " ? (Luke i. 33.) And of St. John when he said, " There are three that bear witness in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost : and these three are one." Oh, let us beware how we trifle with that witness in heaven, " the Word." Let it reign over our hearts, our words, our actions, and our thoughts. " Blessed are they that hear the word of God and keep it." " The Word was God." " And the Word was made flesh." But it is still represented in heaven, and bears witness there.

" There are three that bear witness in earth, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood : and these three agree in one." (1 Epist. John v. 8.) It is the Spirit of the Word, or of Truth, which is ever revealing the water of life as it rolls through the sacred volume. " Out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. But this he spake of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive." (John vii. 38.) The same eternal Spirit is ever revealing Christ, and the efficacy of His blood : " He shall glorify me ; for he shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you." (John xvi. 9 ; xiv. 15.) St. John said truly : " These three agree in one." " It is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth. This is the witness of God which he hath testified of his Son."

Having thus noticed the doctrine of life as set forth by the Apostle in these Epistles, I have to notice, secondly, the decided manner in which he sets forth obedience as the indigenous fruit of that life.

" Hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his

commandments." To keep the letter of all the commandments of God, in the spirit which He demands of us, is not easy. How often do we fail! How often do we rise up again, and in a repentant, contrite spirit strive afresh; and then, when by the grace of God we are enabled to keep His commandments, "we do know that we know him." And this conscience void of offence towards God, is not presumption, but a sublime blessedness, known only to the justified believer. "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the Churches. To him that *overcometh* will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth save he that receiveth it." (Rev. ii. 17.)

"He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked." What a standard for the Apostle to rear! Who can attain to it? To the calm, holy, high elevation of the Redeemer's mind, and spirit? "He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness even until now." And yet how much malicious hatred do we see in those who call themselves children of light. Let them try themselves by this touchstone, and try more humbly, "to walk even as Christ walked." "He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him." Hatred cannot dwell in the effulgence of the light of Revelation, of life; therefore, knowledge is not perfected in him who hateth his brother.

"Love not the world, neither the things that are in the

world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that *doeth* the will of God abideth for ever." (1 John ii.) Thus it was that St. John led on his converts from life to obedience in heart; and from obedience to life eternal; the germ of life here being but the dawn of our eternal Oneness with God.

"Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not *seen* him, neither known him. He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil." How is Christ to do this? By *palpably* convincing of sin, by teaching us till He has gone to the root, and uprooted sin, and then by planting deep His own nature upon the ground thus prepared, that it may "take root downward, and bear fruit upward."

"Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his sin remaineth in him: and he cannot sin because he is born of God." Oh, this is indeed a glorious consummation of the glorious Gospel of Christ, a being so born of God that he cannot sin. The seed, is "the incorruptible seed of the Word of God," as St. Peter says, "being born again" of it. (1 Pet. i. 23.) And St. John says: it remaineth so that we cannot sin. "The Word of God abideth in you, and ye have

overcome the wicked one." (John ii. 14.) I love very much this climax, this palpable, tangible teaching, "Take hold of eternal life." How finely and gloriously does it contrast over against the darkness, the scepticism, the infidelity, and the compromise of unsound, modern theology! Oh, let us hug our Bible to our hearts—it is our life. The devil has been trying to extinguish the life of it; but let us more resolutely determine to consume him by the breath of it.

"And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we *keep* his commandments, and *do* those things that are pleasing in his sight." (Ib. iii. 6, 8, 9, 22.) I do not believe that want, and affliction, and loss, and misery, and death are of God; they come of sin, and to convince of sin; no sin, no suffering. "The last enemy that is to be destroyed is death." Then let us not think, with some, that the Millennium is at the door; it cannot be; sin is not destroyed, the works of the devil are not destroyed; men do neither *keep*, nor do God's commandments; sin is not to be slurred over, but to be cured. Death is not destroyed.

"We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not; but he that is *begotten* of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not." (Ib. v. 18.) "Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you than he that is in the world." (Ib. iv. 4.) God in us, our strength, our light, our life, our exceeding great reward. No system but that of Christianity can thus bring home to us God, and Himself raise us to Himself.

“Beloved, follow not that which is evil, but that which is good. He that *doeth* good is of God: but he that doeth evil hath not *seen* God.” (3 John 11.) Oh, I say again, this is a glorious climax of the Gospel of Christ, to see God, to know Him, to keep His commandments, and to love Him. There is one miserable contrast to this in this third Epistle, 9, 10, 12; I will not quote it. But if it were not most miserably to misplace the words of our great poet here, I would quote them instead.

“Close up the scene, and draw the curtain round,
And let us all to meditation.”

I have, thirdly, to notice, in these Epistles, “Love, the fulfilling of the law,” growing out of “the doctrine of Christ.”

“Whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother. For this is the message that ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one another.” (1 John iii. 10, 11.) In the beginning we find this doctrine of love divinely taught. “Love me, and keep my commandments.” (Exod. xx. 6.) This was not only the law of Sinai, but of heaven, of the Spirit. And, again, “These things I command you, that ye love one another.” (John xv. 17.) St. John knew this love to be the fruit of the doctrine of Christ; “The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus.” Then he contrasted the hatred of Cain over against the righteous works of Abel. “Wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil, and his brother’s righteous.” And so I think it will always be found,

that hatred arises in some *deficiency* in ourselves, and not in the faults of those who are hated. The love of God is not perfected in our hearts, and hence hatred to the brethren. See God's profound reasoning upon the point, Gen. iv. 5—7. And hence, too, the original proverb, "We hate more those we have injured, than those who have injured us."

"We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death. Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him." In how many ways hatred may be productive of death, and of spiritual death, to others, it is impossible for us in this life to calculate or know. Balaam hated the people of God; and the stumbling-block he cast in their way caused death, and spiritual death. (Num. xxv.) Oh, let us beware of hatred, lest eternal life abide not in us.

"Hereby perceive we the love of God, because He laid down His life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren." The Apostle could not select reasons and arguments higher than these. Who in this world can thus lie becalmed upon the bosom of heaven and of life? "But whoso hath this world's goods, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him? My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth." And hence, the wise and beautiful selection for our Communion Service, "Never turn thy face from any poor

man ; and then the face of the Lord shall not be turned away from thee."

"Hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him. For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things." It would have been impossible for a person to have written this whose experience in the Divine life had not attained almost to the pinnacle of perfection. The heart of St. John throbbed with love unfeigned, with true benevolence, and it was to him a strong, sweet assurance that he was of the truth. Let us strive prayerfully and confidently to obtain the like precious confidence.

Still his perfected mind and sanctified soul passed on, and took a higher standing still. "Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love." And then he paraphrases his subject, by setting forth God as manifested to us in His Son, and His love in giving us life through Him. However the confusion and strange paradoxes of time may seem to contradict the assertion, still it is true that "God is love,"—a Being of love as exhibited to us in Christ. Contemplate His life and death, and you may study the God, Love. But in heaven alone shall we compass the Infinite. "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, but it doth not yet appear what we shall be." (1 John iii. 2.)

"Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one

another. If we love one another, *God dwelleth in us*, and his love is perfected in us." "God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him. Herein is our love made perfect, *that we may have boldness in the day of judgment.*" I will not urge this subject any further, but leave it at that *Divine bar*. Who could venture to be arraigned there,—to be tried at the bar of God's own nature? "If our heart condemn us" now, may we not justly expect that the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, so amply provided for us, will condemn us then? Oh, then, let us strive more to attain to the high standard He has reared for us, "Be ye perfect, as your Father which is in heaven is perfect;" and then "we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him."

Do we now understand Isaiah? "I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up. His train filled the temple. Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts." Why this adoration? St. John says, "For we shall see him as he is." Do we now understand the name the angel gave to Jesus? "He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the *Highest.*" When shall we understand the moral elevation signified in this figurative language? When in our hearts the doors of Janus are shut, as they were in St. John's, then Christ will appear, and we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is.

This doctrine of "Love the fulfilling of the law" is the last phase I have to notice here of the glorious Gospel of Christ.

One of my principal objects in this undertaking has been to set forth the great commission of the Church as instituted by God,—by God in Christ, by a glorified Redeemer; with St. Paul, and with St. John. We have seen forgiveness to have been the morality of the cross of Christ, and forgiveness of sin to have been the moral splendour of that cross; and we have seen, too, forgiveness to be the morality of His Gospel; the forgiveness of sin, the moral splendour of that Gospel; love to be the inherent attribute of His nature; and it is no trifling thing to mar that *glory*; and now it only remains to make the application of the subject to ourselves. Has the design of God been carried out? “Occupy till I come.” He is now come to demand an account of stewardship, to reckon with His servants. Have they been faithful to the trust committed to them,—to the true riches? or has she wasted her Lord’s goods? Has she abused the canopy of Divine grace, which by Christ was raised up over her,—the order of Divine, sovereign authority with which He invested her? Has she arrogated to herself the gourd which came up in a night? If she has, it must perish in a night, to teach her that His “throne is high and lifted up.” Read His sure word, “Wherefore doth the wicked condemn God? he hath said in his heart, Thou wilt not require it. *Thou hast seen*; for thou beholdest mischief and spite, to requite it with thy hand. Break thou the arm of the wicked and the evil man: *seek out* his wickedness till *thou find none*. The Lord is King for ever and ever. To

judge the fatherless and the oppressed, that the man of the earth may *no more oppress.*" (Ps. x.)

As I have said before, Elisha was a type of Christ; Naaman, of the whole leprous body of the lost; and Gehazi was a type of the servants, ministers of Christ. (Matt. x. 24, 25; xviii. 32; xx. 27; xxiv. 45, 46, 48, 50; xxv. 21, 26, 30; Luke xii. 47.) But Gehazi, the servant of Elisha the man of God, said, Behold, my master hath spared Naaman this *Syrian*, in not receiving at his hands that which he brought: but, as the Lord liveth, I will run after him, and take somewhat of him." And see the lie in that man's mouth, "My master hath sent me." "And Elisha said unto him, Whence comest thou, Gehazi? And he said, Thy servant went no whither. And he said unto him, Went not mine heart with thee when the man turned again from his chariot to meet thee? Is it a time to receive money, and to receive garments, and oliveyards, and vineyards, and sheep, and oxen, and menservants, and maidservants? The leprosy therefore of Naaman shall cleave unto thee, and unto *thy seed*"—Levitical, and Apostolical succession—"for ever. And he went out from his presence a leper as white as snow." (2 Kings v.)

What does it mean? The sovereign grace and mercy of God are not to be abrogated, redemption through Christ is not to be abrogated; the sovereign, Divine forgiveness of sin is not to be abrogated; no, but visible sovereignty, temporal domination; all are now to go forth a spiritual priesthood:

not only to be the true Church in this little island, but to be a kingdom of priests all over the world. "Jesus found in the temple those that sold oxen, and sheep, and doves, and the changers of money sitting. And he said, Take these things hence; make not my Father's house a house of merchandise. And his disciples *remembered* that it was written, The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up." (John ii.) To come under condemnation for sin, is to go forth from the presence of God, "a leper as white as snow."

"And now I exhort you to be of good cheer: for there shall be no loss of life among you, *but of the ship.*"

"Thou art the *King of Glory*: O Christ."

Thou that dwellest between the cherubims, shine forth."—

PSALM LXXX. 1.

INCARNATE God of Seraphim,
Of high and shining Cherubim!
Incarnate in Thy Word, still be
Our Leader on to victory.

In this bless'd Oracle we trace
The light and *glory* of Thy face;
Here meet Thee on Thy mercy-seat;*
And wait and worship at Thy feet.

Yes, from between the Cherubim,
God communes with and answers men;†
And here His royal priesthood stand,
To know and do their King's command.

Shekinah, Life, who dwellest there,
Truth, Wisdom, Light, from heaven's sphere,
Oh, teach, direct, control, each day:
Speak, Thou Incarnate Deity.

Speak to Thy waiting servants peace,
Unlock the mysteries of Thy grace;
"Shine forth,"—oh, "cause Thy face to shine;"
Though wandering stars, we still are Thine.

If judgment issue from Thy Word,
Oh, bathe in love the furbish'd sword—
"*Sword of the Spirit!*" "God is love:"
No other voice is known above.

* Exod. xxv. 22.

† Numb. vii. 89.

If Thou art sent to call us there,
 Our faith shall rise without a fear ;
 Kneel, kiss the sceptre of our King,
 And venture new requests to bring.

He will o'erreach the sword by grace,
 In judgment show the Father's face,
 Unveil the mysteries of His love,
 Lead on from earth to thrones above.

Thou holy fire of Cherubim,
 Then fall upon the sons of men,*
 Till brightness, *glory*, fill each heart,
 And God shall never more depart.

Shine forth, Thou God of Seraphim,
 Disarm, expel "the man of sin ;"
 High on the circle of our sphere
 Write Thou Thyself, "The Lord is there." †

* Ezek. iv. 2—4.

† Ib. xlviii. 35.







